

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS076			
Name of Service:	Stepping Stones Creche & Montessori			
Address of Service:	30 The Belfry Crescent, City West, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D24 YW63			
Name of Registered Provider:	Maureen Butler-Irwin			
Service type:	Part Time			
Date(s) of Inspection:	30/05/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	50
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7 th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.			
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern			
Title:	Early Years Inspector			
Authority to Inspect				
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).				
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable			

Description of service

Stepping Stones Creche & Montessori is located in a residential area of south west county Dublin. A morning and afternoon sessional service is offered to children aged 2-6 years with the option for part-time care between 8:30am and 3:30pm. The premises consist of a two storey, purpose-built building with four child-care rooms and an outdoor area.

Staffing

There are 12 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider. All staff are qualified to work directly with the children.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring.

The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 31 May 2024 in relation to the significant risk identified under regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The registered provider submitted a response on 31 May 2024 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk. This information is included in the report under regulation 23 – Actions submitted by the registered provider.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service had a named person in charge and a named person to deputise.

(b) The person in charge or named deputy were always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person in charge or a named deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(2)

(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references. Two past employer references were available with a record of validation for all staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults and were dated within the last three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for all adults whom this was required.

(4) All adults working directly with children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of staff were working with the children throughout the inspection. Ten staff were working directly with 50 children. Two managers were available to help as needed.

(2) The minimum adult to children ratio requirement was maintained. The staff roster provided for the minimum ratio requirements to be maintained at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 records for children were reviewed. The required information was available as outlined below.

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date when each child first attended the service.
- (c) An electronic system was available for recording the dates when children cease attending the service.
- (d) The name, address and telephone number of parents and information where parents can be contacted.

- (e) Names and contact details of other adults authorised to collect the child.
- (f) Medical information, allergies, dietary preferences, additional needs, and other information specific to the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- (h) Immunisation details.
- (i) Signed parental consent for medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Details of children's attendance was available including the time they arrived at and left the service.
- (i) A staff roster was available detailing the start and finish times of all adults.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Equipment was appropriately maintained and items that could cause harm to children including kitchen items, cleaning products and medicines were kept out of their reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of measures to keep children safe in the event of a fire; this included practicing regular fire drills and maintaining an attendance record of each child on the premises.

Infection Control:

Appropriate measures were taken to reduce the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment were clean and well maintained; waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal operated lidded bins; cleaning schedules were in place which included the regular laundering of soft materials.

Sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped to support handwashing including step-by-step pictures for children to follow. Children washed their hands after outdoor play, after using the toilet and before eating.

Outings:

The registered provider and staff reported that the children are not taken on outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

Through review of records and discussions with staff it was evident that adequate procedures were not in place to safeguard a child who required daily, varying doses of injectable medicine.

1. The service's policy on Administering Medication had not been shared with the staff member responsible for calculating doses and injecting the child with medication.
2. There was no record of signed parent/guardian consent to administer the medication.
3. There was no letter from the child's GP/medical team or prescription stating the name of the medication and the dose to be administered.
4. The care plan available did not include all the information required to provide appropriate management of the child's medical condition.
5. The staff member responsible for administering the medicine had not received professional training, contrary to the service's Administration of Medication policy.
6. Staff were not aware that a second person was required to witness the administration of medication as a safety measure in keeping with the service's policy.

7. There was insufficient communication between the service and the child's parent/guardian to provide for appropriate continuity of care on collection from the service. Copies of the medication record were not given to the parent/guardian on collection, contrary to the policy; the medication records were not signed by the parent/guardian until days after the medication had been given.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 31 May 2024 due to the significant risk posed. The registered provider submitted a response on 31 May 2024 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk. This information is included in the corrective and preventive actions below.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

- All relevant documentation regarding administration of medication has been obtained.
- Staff member received further training from medical professional.
- Care plan in place, official medication books bought, and all staff members have been given copy of Medication Policy and have had training meeting regarding same.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Documentation was submitted in keeping with the actions stated by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) A person trained in first aid for children was always available. The staff roster provided for a person with training in first aid for children to be available at all times of opening.

(2)

(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in conspicuous positions easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available to children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Records were available of fire drills carried out in the service. The most recent drill recorded was dated 30 April 2024.
 - (b) A record was available detailing the maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment dated January 2024 and the smoke alarm system dated November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position.