

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS111			
Name of Service:	Little Gems Childcare			
Address of Service:	Suaimhneas, Commons Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D22 E8H4			
Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Timmons			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	30/01/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	24
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Carysfort House, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin			
Inspection undertaken by:	L. Magee & E. Mulhern			
Title:	Early Years Inspectors			

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).

Description of service

Little Gems Childcare provides full-time, part time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years between 7.30 am – 6pm, Monday to Friday. The sessional service runs from 9.15 am – 12.15 pm. There are 5 preschool rooms. Four of the preschool rooms are situated in the main building and a fifth preschool room is located to the rear of the property. Little Gems Childcare is located in a two-storey building, in an urban setting of Clondalkin, Dublin 22. A large enclosed outdoor play area is available to the children

Staffing

The service employs 20 staff members. This includes the designated person in charge, 18 childcare employees and a chef and a cleaner. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. On the day of inspection, there were 14 adults working directly with the children, this included a student who was working in the service on placement and a home support worker.

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/ health, welfare and development of child/ and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of the child

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

On 31 January 2024, a referral by the early years inspectorate was made to Beterstart for quality improvement.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2). The files of 21 staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process and for the purpose of assessing compliance with this regulation. These 21 files were reviewed on the day of the inspection as evidenced below;

(a) Thirty-six validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Four validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting was available for all adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for all adults who had lived outside the state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Eighteen adults who were working directly with the children had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications and two adults had qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

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- (a) & (b) Two validated references were not available from either a past employer or a source other than a past employer in respect of one adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (a) & (b) Two validated references are now available for this member of staff. Yearly audit of all staff HR files.
- Manager and Assistant manager to verify a file is complete when new staff member is employed.
 - HR file for new member of staff should not be filed away until complete and verified.
 - Visual aid such as a sticker/post-it, put on front of file which should not be removed until file is complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed by the registered provider. This regulation will be reassessed on the next inspection.

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 adults were working with the children. There were 11 adults working with 43 children in the morning and 10 adults with 24 children in the afternoon.

(2) At all times the minimum required ratio of adults to children was maintained.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(i) The staff roster did accurately reflect who was present on the day of inspection.

(j) Two medication administration forms were reviewed. All completely correctly including evidence that parents had been informed when children were given medication.

(k) Thirty accident and incident records were reviewed. All completely correctly including evidence that parents had been informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

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:

The entrance/exit door was secure to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.

Emergency exits were kept clear at all times during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The sanitary facility was equipped with warm water and liquid soap.

Completed cleaning schedules were in place demonstrating the daily and weekly procedures taken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Children were not recorded accurately in three different rooms of the service which is a safety risk in the event of an emergency as evidenced below:
 - In the Toddler room at 10:17am, one child was present but was not recorded as being present.
 - In the Toddler room at 10.17am, a second child who was recorded as being present, was also recorded as having left the service at 5.50pm later this evening.
 - In the Playgroup room at 12.24pm, eleven children were marked in as present but only eight children were in the room. Three children had left the service but had not been recorded as having left.
 - In Playgroup 2 at 12:53pm, one child was recorded as having left the service at 12:15 pm but was still present. Staff confirmed this child will be recorded in the next session when another staff member comes in at 1.30pm.
2. Heavy furniture was not secured in the Baby and Toddler rooms. The inspectors observed unsecured, tall, heavy shelving units in both rooms posing a risk of tipping and injury.
3. Hazardous items were not secured out of reach of children, posing a risk of injury if accessed. The inspectors observed the following:

- A kettle that was hot to touch on the countertop of the area used by the children from the Pre-school 2 to access the sanitary facilities.
- An aerosol and sterilising fluid in an open box on the floor of sanitary area used by children from the Toddler room.
- Cleaning spray on the windowsill in the sanitary area used by the children from the Playgroup room.
- A large quantity of alcohol hand gel in a low-level unsecured cupboard in the sanitary area used by the children from Pre-school 1.
- Loose cables from air filtering machines on the floor of each care room.
- Medication stored in a child's bag in the Baby room.
- Bottles of medication stored in an unsecured fridge in the Baby room.

Infection Control:

4. Handwashing did not occur at required times posing a risk of infection spreading within the service. The inspectors observed the following:

- Children in the Baby room did not have their hands washed before eating.
- Children from Preschool 2 left the sanitary area after using the toilet without washing their hands or being reminded by staff to do so.
- Staff wiped children's noses in the Baby and Preschool 1 rooms without washing their hands afterwards.
- Staff gave children tissue to wipe their noses in Pre-school 2 but the children were not reminded to wash their hands afterwards.

5. Facilities for drying children's and adult's hands after handwashing were not adequately provided, posing a risk of infection spreading. The inspectors observed the following:

- The paper towel dispenser at the wash-hand basin in one of the sanitary areas used by children from Pre-school 2 was missing from the wall mount.
- The paper towel dispenser at the wash-hand basin in the second sanitary area used by the children from Pre-school 2 was empty throughout the inspection. The paper towels were stored on the windowsill.
- There were no facilities for hand drying in the kitchenette within Pre-school 2 where staff prepared food for the children. The inspector observed a staff member entering the sanitary facilities to dry their hands after handwashing.

6. Items for use within the preschool rooms were stored in the sanitary areas posing a risk of cross contamination.

The inspectors observed the following:

- A bed, art materials, a child's umbrella and highchairs used by the children attending the Baby room to eat their meals were stored in the nappy changing room.
- Art materials were stored in the sanitary facilities used by the children from Pre-school 1 and the Playgroup room. Art materials from the Playgroup room were stored on the nappy-changing unit.

7. The nappy changing mat used by the children from the Baby room could not be cleaned effectively, posing a risk of cross contamination. Inspectors observed a large tear in the mat with the inner foam exposed.

8. There was no toilet paper holder available in the toilet facility used by the children from Pre-school 1. Inspectors observed the roll of toilet paper stored on the floor posing a risk of cross contamination.

9. Children's soothers were not stored appropriately posing a risk of cross infection. Individual containers were not available. The inspector observed unlabelled soothers stored collectively in one container in the Baby room. A soother was observed being placed on a shelf when not in use.

10. Waste was not appropriately managed posing a risk of infection spreading within the service. The inspectors observed the following:

- The pedal on the lidded bins in the sanitary areas used by the children in Pre-school rooms 1 and 2 were not working. The lids of the bins could only be lifted by handling.
- There was no bag in the bin used by the staff and children in Preschool 2 to dispose of general waste including used tissues and food. Children were observed entering the sanitary area to dispose of food waste whilst handling the lid of the bin.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Child attendance books, previously kept in manager's office have been issued to each room. Staff now complete these books themselves instead of using attendance sheets. New attendance books are now in place in Baby and Toddler rooms. Meeting with all staff on the importance of completing these attendance books and a reminder as to the importance of the actual purpose of these attendance books regarding child safety and security and not for financial records. Going forward management will focus on governance and vigilance, i.e. attendance books will be inspected by management at random times to ensure that they are completed correctly and reflect the actual presence of children in the childcare room.
2. The shelving unit in the Baby room has been secured to the wall. Staff meeting to remind staff of the importance of risk assessments and safety in childcare settings. Governance and vigilance by management to ensure rooms are set up in a safe and secure way. Management needs to regularly inspect rooms and furniture to ensure children are in a safe and secure environment.
3. Kettle has been removed from Pre-school 2.
Box has been removed from the sanitary area in the Toddler room and a new shelf has been fitted for storage of any cleaning solutions.
Cleaning spray removed from the windowsill in the sanitary area.
Alcohol hand gel removed and disposed of.
Existing safety lock present on this unit replaced with a more user- friendly lock.
Filtering units have been removed from all childcare rooms. Safe storage of medications.
Staff were re-issued with Little Gems Health and Safety Policy and Administration of medication policy which includes reference to safe storage of medications.

Staff meeting to discuss the importance of;

- Safety in childcare rooms and sanitary areas.
- safe storage of cleaning and sterilising solutions.
- Importance of vigilant use of safety locks on fridges and units where any unsafe solutions are stored.

Management needs to have a stronger role in ensuring the implementation of existing policies. When staff review policies, management need to actively ensure that the policy is then followed in reality in each of the childcare rooms. Going forward management will inspect all childcare rooms on a daily basis to ensure that correct procedures are followed regarding all childcare policies.

Infection Control:

4. Staff meeting to discuss infection control within the childcare setting. The importance of hand washing for both staff and children emphasised. Reintroduction of facecloths into the Baby room to help with handwashing of baby's hands before and after meals. Review by staff of Infection control policy. Active role by management to ensure effective implementation of existing policies. In addition to daily inspection of childcare rooms, random inspection of rooms to observe meal-time procedures and handwashing routines after toileting and personal hygiene.
5. New paper towel dispenser has been purchased and awaiting delivery for installation in sanitary area in Pre-School 2. New paper towel dispenser purchased and awaiting delivery for installation in kitchenette area of Pre-school 2 area. Staff meeting to remind staff of existing check sheets which exist to remind staff to fill all paper towel dispensers at the end of each working day in preparation for the next working. At present daily risk assessments are completed in each childcare room by staff. Management needs to ensure that staff are not completing lists without actually checking the area they are assessing. i.e. automatically ticking lists without completing the task. The only way to prevent and ensure this is not happening is for management to inspect room check lists and confirm that it is completed correctly.
6. All items, (bed, art material, child's umbrella and highchairs) have been removed from the Baby room changing area. Art materials removed from all sanitary areas associated with all childcare rooms. New notices placed in all sanitary areas reminding staff that no art material is allowed in sanitary area. Staff meeting to discuss infection control and the risk of cross contamination in sanitary areas used by children and staff.
7. The nappy changing unit in Baby room sanitary area has been removed and replaced by a new unit.
8. New toilet paper holder has been purchased and installed in toilet area of sanitary area used by Pre-school 1 children.
9. New containers purchased and labelled with individual children's names for the storage of soothers.

10. New waste bins purchased and installed in relevant childcare rooms. Waste bins inspected in rooms and where appropriate bin lids were correctly attached to bins so that the pedal bins work correctly. Management to inspect sanitary areas on a daily basis to ensure no artwork or any other inappropriate items are being stored in sanitary areas. As part of daily inspections of sanitary areas nappy changing units will also be inspected to ensure units are fit for purpose. Management must ensure room check lists carried out by staff match what is actually happening in the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response has addressed the non-compliances identified. This regulation will be reassessed on the next inspection.