

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS145			
Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare - Tallaght			
Address of Service:	Marfield, New Link Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D24 NV65			
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date(s) of Inspection:	17/04/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	54
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 and F. Carty			
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).				
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable			

Description of service

Cocoon Childcare – Tallaght is one of 14 childcare services operated by Cocoon Childcare Ltd. Children aged 1 to 6 years are accommodated on a sessional, part-time, and full-day care basis between 7:30am and 6:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme in the morning from 9:30am to 12:30pm and the afternoon from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. The service operates from a purposely built facility located on the ground floor of a mixed commercial and residential development. The service has five care rooms and two sleep rooms. An outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 23 staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge, operations manager, cleaning staff and chefs. Sixteen staff are employed to work directly with the children. Relief cover is provided from the company's other early years services when needed. Fourteen staff were allocated to work directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service - Regulation 19 (1)(b). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2 and Pre-school rooms.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, operations manager, 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 person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

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

(2) The inspection focused on the recruitment records of the 23 adults employed to work in the service and 1 adult who was providing relief cover on the day of inspection.

(a) & (b) It was evident that appropriate consideration had been given to the past employer references of all adults. References from a reputable source were available for staff who only had one or no previous employers. Records of verification were available.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults and were dated within the last two 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 adults were always working with the children. There were 14 adults working directly with 54 children.

(2) The minimum ratio requirement of adults to children was always maintained.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The inspectors observed appropriate and suitable care practices within the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2 and Pre-school rooms. Meals and snacks were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and were offered when children were eating. The staff supported the children to manage their personal care. They provided younger children with bibs to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating. Children's nappies were changed routinely and in between when required.

Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently. Staff supported the children with handwashing at appropriate times and helped the children to clean their faces after eating. They ensured the children were dressed appropriate to the weather raingear, coats and boots when going outside.

An area was provided with matting and cushions within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after dinner. Staff told the inspector that they provide for the children to sleep outside of these times if they show signs of tiredness. The children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff sitting with the children and soothing them as needed during this time. A record was kept for staff to communicate with parents/guardians in relation to the individual children's care. This included information relating to diet, sleep, and nappy-changes.

(3) The adults spoke kindly to the children and were responsive to their needs. They acknowledged the children by name and provided them with comfort when they became upset. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the service's policy in relation to managing challenging behaviour. They demonstrated this by using distraction techniques and assisting the children to resolve conflict in a calm and respectful manner. The staff were aware of practices that are prohibited under the regulation.

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

A sample of measures taken to protect the children from harm are outlined below:

General Safety:

- Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised.
- Escape routes were kept clear for the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire.
- Cables, blind cords, and cleaning products were secured out of reach of children.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

- The service and equipment were appropriately cleaned and maintained.
- Sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels to facilitate good hand hygiene.
- Children's hands were washed at appropriate times including after using the toilet or nappy changes and before eating.
- Children's nappies were changed in a manner that reduces the risk of infection spreading.
- Waste was appropriately disposed of with the use of pedal operated lidded bins.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of reach of children.
- Staff demonstrated an awareness of how to give medications in a safe manner if needed.
- Records were available detailing medications that had been given to children including consent and communication with parents/guardians.

Safe Sleep:

- Children slept in cots and low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Appropriate bedding was used to prevent overheating.
- Sleeping children were checked at 10-minute intervals and a record was kept.
- An adult remained in the room where children were sleeping on low beds.

Outing:

The person in charge told the inspectors that the service does not undertake outings.

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.

Compliance Information

Records were available showing five staff had undergone current recognised training in first aid for children. The staff roster provided for at least one trained staff member to always be available.