

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS148
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare Citywest
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	Unit 1&2 Block D Ground Floor, Belfry Square, Citywest, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	D24 DX53
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	21/05/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	64	PM	48
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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 Rosemary Brien
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 Citywest is one of 15 full-day-care services operated by the registered provider. The service opens Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:30pm and accommodates children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for three hours each day, 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose-built ground floor premises in a retail and apartment complex. Children are allocated to one of six pre-school rooms according to their age and stage of development. They have access to sanitary facilities and an outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are 20 staff employed to manage the service and work directly with pre-school children. Fourteen staff were allocated to work directly with the children on the day of the inspection. One adult was present on a work experience placement.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. 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 Baby, Wobbler and Toddler 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 staff, management team, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.
- (b) The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a named deputy to be present at all times of opening.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service. The staff roster outlined the lines of authority and the role of each adult.

(2)

- (a) & (b) It was evident that appropriate consideration had been given to the references of all adults employed to manage the service or work directly with the pre-school children.

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

(d) International police vetting was available for six 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a) & (b) It was not evident that appropriate consideration had been given to references of two adults. One adult present on a work experience placement did not have a second verified reference. A second adult who was contracted to work with school-aged children and had access to the service did not have any references.

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who told inspectors she had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult. It could not be determined whether police vetting was required for a second adult who was contracted to work with school-aged children and had access to the service; there was no past employment record available or records to show this had been considered.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)& (b) Two references have been received and verified for both adults. All staff files will be checked thoroughly by the management team and the recruitment team before both contracted workers and students start in the service.

(2)(d) The staff member who required international police vetting has left the service. A full staff file is now in place for the person contracted to work with school aged children, although this person no longer has access to the service. This adult does not require police vetting from any country outside of Ireland. All staff files will be checked thoroughly in future before both contracted workers and students start in the service by both the management and recruitment team. The interview questions have now been updated to ask a direct question about previously living abroad.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

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 14 adults working directly with 64 children. Members of management were available to assist as needed.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was always maintained.

art 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.

Compliance Information

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children throughout the inspection. A key-worker system was in place. The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the children in their care including their likes and dislikes. Children were comforted when they fell or became upset with adult's holding them and speaking to them softly. Meals, snacks, and drinks were provided at regular intervals. Infants were held when bottle-feeding and were offered bottles of milk according to their individual routines.

The adults supported the children to manage their personal care; they placed bibs on the younger children to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating; they helped the children to clean their faces and hands after eating; they checked the children's nappies regularly and changed them promptly when required. The adults used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Children who used the toilet were supported towards independence.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Cots and low beds were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. Children attending the Baby room were placed to sleep according to their individual needs. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff soothing the children as needed during this time.

The staff kept a record in relation to the individual children's care to communicate with parents/guardians. This included information relating to diet, sleep, and nappy-changes.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Suitable care practices were not in place in the Wobbler room at mealtime. Adults sat with the children for a short period only before preparing the room and children for sleep. Some of the children showed signs that they

wanted more food including scraping their bowls, asking for more, eating from other children’s bowls and eating other children’s food that had spilled onto the table. No more food was provided. Issues regarding the provision of meals in this room were observed on the previous inspection dated 2 July 2023. The actions submitted by the registered provider to address this had not been effective.

2. Appropriate consideration was not given to the individual sleep needs of children attending the Wobbler room. There were 12 children in attendance ranging in age from 14 to 30 months. The children were allocated to have one sleep at 12pm. It is acknowledged that staff told the inspector that they accommodate the children to sleep outside of this time if they are falling asleep or if the parents state the child did not sleep well the night before. However, some of the children were showing signs of over-tiredness throughout the morning and were not placed to sleep. This included rubbing their eyes, wanting to be held, disengaging, staring into space, and crying. Some of the children had arrived at the service at 7:30am. This issue was observed on the previous inspection dated 5 July 2023. The actions submitted by the registered provider to address this had not been effective.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection the management team spent one week reviewing the centre layout and decided to regroup the children into smaller care groups to assist the staff in meeting the children’s needs. The two assistant managers divided themselves into the junior and senior ends of the building to focus on their appointed zones for support and supervision, which has been particularly beneficial to strengthening mealtimes, sleep times and transitions in play. Extra portions of food have also been provided at mealtimes for children who may require or request additional food.

The management team will continue to support staff through training and development and the appointed assistant managers will support their zones during the care day, particularly mealtimes and sleep times until the staff are fully competent in managing transitions. The manager met with the cook to explain the importance of providing extra food to the care rooms at mealtimes and the meals/portion sizes are monitored by the management team before entering the care rooms throughout the day

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance. This will be reviewed in practice on the next inspection.