

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS148
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare Citywest
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Address of Service:	Unit 1&2 Block D Ground Floor, Belfry Square, Citywest, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	64	PM	54
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & 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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Citywest is one of 15 childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day-care, part-time care and sessional care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday. Sessional care is provided from 09:30 to 12:30.

The service is located in an urban, residential area of Citywest, south Dublin and operates from a purpose-built ground floor premises in a retail and apartment complex.

There are six care rooms in the service. The Baby room caters for children up to 1 year of age. The Wobbler room caters for children aged 1 year. The Toddler room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Junior Preschool room caters for children aged 2 years. The Preschool 2 room caters for children aged 2 to 4 years and operates on a sessional care basis. The Preschool 3 room caters for children aged 3 to 4 years.

There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service currently employs 21 staff including a manager. There were 17 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The service also employs a chef and a cleaner. The registered provider and operations manager arrived during the morning of the 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 area of governance, records, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9(1),(2),(4),(7)(a) Management and Recruitment,
10 Policies Procedures etc. of Pre-school Service
11(1),(2),(8)(a) Staffing Levels,
16(h),(i),(k) Record in relation to Pre-school Service,
19(1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child,
23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,
27 Supervision,
31(e) Notification of Incidents,
32 Complaints.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

9(2),(4),(7) Management and Recruitment,
16(h),(k) Record in relation to Pre-school Service,
31(e) Notification of Incidents,
32 Complaints.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

19(1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child,
27 Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection for these regulations included the Wobbler room.

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

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate on the 23 September 2024.

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

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)

(a)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection. A clear management structure is in place in the service with additional oversight provided by an operations manager.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that six adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 21 May 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the twelve references that were required, six were available from a past employer and six were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the six staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required for six staff members and was available for these staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

(7)

(a)

The registered provider ensured that all employees were appropriately supervised, and provided with necessary training and information prior to commencing employment in the service and on an ongoing basis once employment commenced on the policies, procedures and statements specified in schedule 5 as evidenced by the following:

- Staff detailed the induction training process in place for new employees which includes training and time to read the service's policies and procedures.
- A review of documentation evidenced that regular staff meetings are held by the designated person in charge for all employees. Staff stated that practice issues and amendments made to policies and procedures are discussed during such meetings. Evidence was available to demonstrate that a staff meeting had taken place the week of this inspection.
- Staff stated that regular one on one supervision meetings take place between staff members and the person in charge or deputy person in charge. Evidence was available to demonstrate that supervision meetings had taken place the week of this inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the written policies, procedures and statements were in place relating to the following policies

- Accidents and Incidents
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Training
- Supervision of Staff

Non-Compliance Information

The risk management policy available on the day of inspection lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate the following:

- How risk assessments completed by the service are conducted and documented.
- Who is involved in the risk assessment process.
- How long the risk management records will be kept.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The risk management policy has been further developed to include the recommendations listed and extend on, the already existing, managers and staff's responsibilities. The county childcare committees are currently rolling out critical incident training, which we will attend in due course, as there may be information provided that enhances our policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were sixty-four children attending the service being supervised by seventeen adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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

Compliance Information

(h)
Attendance records sampled in the Wobbler and Preschool 2 rooms demonstrated that the attendance of each child was recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(i)
The staff roster was available and reflected the adults working in the service on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(k)
A sample of sixteen accident and incident records were available and were reviewed. Two of these records were not signed by a parent contrary to the service policy on accident and incidents. Failure to ensure that parents have been informed of an injury to their child may pose a risk to the continuity of care of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The 2 incident reports in question have now been signed by the parents. Going forward, we will attach a note to any incident report which hasn't been signed, to state that the parents have been informed, either in person or over the phone, and we will follow up with a signature.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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.

Compliance Information

Meals were provided at regular intervals and drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day.

Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance with their dinner. Additional servings of dinner were available and staff were observed asking children who had finished their meal if they wanted more. Additional servings were provided for all children who requested more.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's hands and faces after dinner as required. Children's nappies were changed regularly and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff demonstrated kindness and affection during all interactions observed by the inspectors. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes. Children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

An area was provided within the room where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Children in the Wobbler room were placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness. Cots were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. 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.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day using a handover sheet to communicate with parents detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.
- Medicines, hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the Wobbler sleep room, trailing cables from an electronic thermometer and a stereo were observed hanging from a shelf within reach of a cot where a child was observed sleeping posing a risk of injury. It is acknowledged that a member of staff moved these items when it was brought to their attention by the inspector.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The trailing cables were removed during the inspection and the radio was moved to the classroom. The staff will ensure that all cables are secured, when completing their risk assessments.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection all children were supervised appropriately and at all times, including transitions, nappy changes, at meal times and while children were sleeping in line with the supervision of children policy. Children were supervised primarily by sight during the course of the inspection. Room layouts allowed for effective supervision.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;*
- (b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

A sample of 16 records of incidents and accidents were reviewed and discussed with the staff. Evidence was available to demonstrate that the registered provider appropriately notified the Agency of an accident that met the threshold for reporting.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- A complaints policy was available in the service which specified the following:
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service.
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with.
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.

(2)

(a) The service had a record of complaints made in respect of the service.

(b) The service had documentary evidence to demonstrate that if a complaint was received it was dealt with according to the service complaints policy.

(3)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) was available which specified the following:

(a) the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with.

(b) This record was available for inspection on the premises by an authorised person.