

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS183
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Name of Service:	Lily Pad Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	16 Main Street, Rathfarnham Village, Dublin 14
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Eircode:	D14 F5X8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Browne
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	24/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	37
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes
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.
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Description of service

Lily Pad Creche & Montessori is a full-day care service located in a residential area in Dublin 14. The service is registered to provide care to 50 children aged 0-5 years Monday to Friday from 7:30am-6pm and is comprised of five care rooms. Wobbler room 1 and Wobbler room 2 are located on the ground floor, wobbler room 1 was closed on the day of inspection. On the first floor, there is the Pre-montessori room and Montessori room 1. Lily Lodge is located in a prefabricated building to the rear of the service. The service has two cot rooms; one on the ground floor of the main building and one to the rear of Lily lodge. The kitchen is located on the ground floor and an enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 10 staff members to work in the service including the person in charge and 9 early years practitioners all of whom work directly with the children. The registered provider attends the service on a daily basis to cover lunchbreaks.

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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1)(a)(b), (2), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 26(1)(2) Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 29 Premises

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 27, Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler room 2 and Lily Lodge and did not include the other 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 inspector wishes 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

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the registered provider and person in charge showed that there are currently ten staff employed in the service including the service manager and nine early years practitioners. The files of all ten staff currently employed in the service were reviewed. A garda vetting disclosure for the registered provider was reviewed.

(a)(b) Nineteen written and validated references were available in relation to 10 adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for ten staff members and the registered provider.

(d) Police vetting was available for seven adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that nine staff members who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) One written reference in relation to one staff member was not available for review although a verification document was present.

(4) Evidence was not available to show that one staff member held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in February 2023. The actions implemented have not prevented recurrence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) A reference was received from an alternative referee and a copy put on file with verification. Current procedures already state that a written reference and a verification document is obtained.

(4) The staff member has submitted her qualification to the DCEDIY for recognition. Staff have been reminded that all qualifications would be checked with the DCEDIY as a matter of routine.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) Copy of the reference.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) and attempted to address the non-compliance under (4). The requirement under (4) has not been met and remains outstanding, the registered provider has been advised to submit the qualification recognition to the inspector once it is received.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Nine staff were caring for 35 children when the inspector arrived in the service. The person in charge was available in a supernumerary position and available to cover in rooms as needed.

(2) Ratios were maintained on the day of inspection. The following was observed;

- In the Wobbler room two staff were caring for 8 children aged 11-18 months.
- In the Toddler room two staff were caring for 8 children aged 1.5-2 years.
- In the Pre-montessori room two staff were caring for 8 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Montessori room two adults were caring for 12 children aged 3-4 years old.

The person in charge and registered provider were available in a supernumerary position and available to cover in rooms as needed.

(8)(a) A review of the staff roster showed that there was a minimum of two people present on the premises during the opening hours of the service.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- The service has a healthy eating policy and meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals. The service provides breakfast and dinner; which is supplied by an outside company while the parents supply a lunch and afternoon tea. Additional portions of dinner were provided as needed and staff advised that additional food was available in the kitchen if children are hungry.
- Water was available and accessible to the children on low level shelving in the care rooms.
- Nappy changing was done on a set schedule and as needed to ensure the children's comfort.
- Children were supported to self-feed with adults on hand to help where required which supported independence.
- Staff used low tones when speaking to the children and provided comfort as needed.

Physical and Material environment:

- Toys and materials were displayed on low level shelving which allowed children to access them freely. This allowed children to have choice and freedom in their play.
- Low level tables and chairs were available for children to engage in tabletop activities and eat meals comfortably.
- Highchairs with a footrest were provided for younger children and were used only at mealtimes to ensure children could comfortably engage in mealtimes.
- The outdoor area offered a range of toys and equipment for gross motor play.

Supporting interactions with child:

- Information about the children's day; sleep times, nappy changing, and food were recorded and shared with parents through daily record books.

- Staff were observed to engage in activities with the children at their level for example staff in the Wobbler room sat on the floor to play with the children. This allows staff to actively engage with the children and support their learning.

Non-Compliance Information

1. An adequate amount of supporting equipment such as pots, pans and food was not available for use in the play kitchens in the Wobbler room, Lily lodge or the outdoor area for example no supporting equipment was available in the Wobbler room while in Lily lodge supporting equipment included two pieces of food and one pot. This may hamper the children's play and learning experience.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Replacement pots, pans and food toys were already purchased but were not put out on the day of inspection. The relevant toys are now present in the Wobbler room, Lily lodge and the outdoor area. The garden is in the process of being done up and old materials and toys were thrown out due to new toys being purchased. Staff were reminded to have sufficient pots, pans and food, etc. out at all times at the February staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of the classrooms and garden with new resources present were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19.

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 service entrance was securely locked, and staff were observed to attend the door to allow access. This prevented unauthorised persons accessing the service.

- Internal doors were fitted with high handles which prevented children from leaving the care rooms unsupervised.
- Blind cords were secured out of reach of the children.
- Low level handrails and non-slip flooring was present on the stairs of the service.
- Cleaning sprays were stored out of reach of the children.
- Child proof locks were used on low level presses to prevent children accessing unsafe materials.

Infection Control:

- Perishable items provided by parents for their children's lunch were refrigerated to prevent spoiling.
- Cot mattresses and sleep mats used in the service were observed to be wipeable and maintained in good condition.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were available throughout the service for disposal of contaminated items.
- Individually labelled cubbies were used to store children's items in the sanitary areas and items such as creams were observed to be clearly labelled.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, dispensed soap and paper handtowels were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- The nappy changing procedure observed was in line with best practice and the service policy.
- Handwashing was observed to take place frequently throughout the day before mealtimes and after toileting or nappy changing.

Safe Sleep:

- Cellular blankets were used for all children sleeping in cots in the service.
- Staff were observed to conduct physical 10-minute checks of sleeping children and these were recorded.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20 °C were maintained in the cot room where a child under 12 months old was sleeping while a temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in rooms where children over 12 months old were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The beanbag in the cosy area of the Wobbler room did not have a washable or wipeable cover and was visibly stained posing an infection control risk.

Safe Sleep:

2. A child aged 15 months was observed wearing a bib while sleeping in the Wobbler cot room at 1pm which posed a risk of strangulation. It is acknowledged that the registered provider removed the bib when alerted to the issue.

Fire Safety:

3. Attendance records were not completed in a timely manner in three of the four care rooms. The following was observed;
 - In the Wobbler room attendance of eight children had not been recorded up to 12:30pm. It was also observed that the time of departure had not been completed for the previous day for any children.
 - One child who had commenced the service in recent days was not recorded on the roll book in the Wobbler room.
 - In Lily Lodge the attendance of seven children of the eight children present was not recorded at 11:25pm.
 - In the Montessori room the attendance of three of the twelve children present was not recorded at 12:05pm.

A review of the policy and discussion with staff showed that the roll books are used during fire evacuation. It is acknowledged that the registered provider had displayed signs in the care rooms reminding staff to complete the roll book in real time and that this task was also part of the daily room checklist. Accurate attendance records are required to ensure a safe evacuation of all children present in the service in the event of a fire emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Bean bag has been disposed of.

Safe Sleep:

2. Creche owner removed bib immediately as noted in the finding. The relevant staff member was immediately informed of the danger. Issue was raised again at the staff meeting to ensure it never happens again.

Fire Safety:

3. All roll books were immediately updated, and staff were spoken to regarding recurrence. There are already numerous signs and procedures in place to ensure roll books are updated. They are routinely checked by management. Staff were again reminded to complete the records at the staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photo of the wobbler room.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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 firefighting 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) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service. The record showed that fire drills are completely monthly with the last fire drill taking place on the 12th January 2024.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was reviewed. The record showed that both the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were last serviced in January 2024.

(4) Notices of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency were displayed throughout the service in care rooms and communal areas. These clearly showed the escape route to be followed from each room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that the children were adequately supervised primarily by sight at all times as per the service policy. At 2:30pm the inspector observed a child aged 14 months alone in the Wobbler room, the door to the care room was closed and staff could not see or hear the child. One staff member was observed changing a nappy in the sanitary area outside of the room. Two staff returned to the care room at 2:33pm. It is acknowledged that both the registered provider and service manager were free at this time to cover in rooms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member was immediately reprimanded by the creche owner and sanctions enforced. The staff member was reminded of the policy and procedures of child safety and advised of further sanctions if the issue reoccurred. All staff were reminded of supervision at the staff meeting.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 27.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required*

Compliance Information

- (a)
 - There were no visual defects observed or highlighted through conversation with the registered provider or staff.

(b)

- A camera bell was present on the front door which allowed staff to assess visitors before opening the door.
- A gate in the outdoor area was secured with a padlock which prevent unauthorised persons accessing the garden area.
- Staff attended the door to allow access to the service and inspector was required to sign in in the visitor book.

(c)

- Windows were opened in care rooms to allow fresh air to circulate.
- Windows provided natural light in all care rooms. This was supplemented as required by artificial light.
- Light in the sleep room was controlled using the blinds to ensure low lighting which was conducive to sleep.
- The stairwell was well lit and well maintained free from hazards.

(d)

- The service appeared clean and maintained.