

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS245		
Name of Service:	Once Upon A Time		
Address of Service:	Arena Creche, Whitestown Way, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D24 K223		
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Marie McCormack, David McCormack		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	13/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	58	PM 56
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, 2 nd Floor, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Foley and G Fagan		
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

The service is located over 2 floors in a large multipurpose unit in Dublin 24. The service has a secure designated entrance/exit door which is monitored by an intercom system.

The following rooms are located on the ground floor, the Junior Wobbler room, the Senior Wobbler room, 2 cot rooms, a kitchen, and an office.

On the 1st floor, there are 3 care rooms named as follows, the Toddler room, the Pre-Montessori room, and the Montessori room. The outdoor play area is accessed from the 1st floor.

Staffing

There were 16 childcare staff including the person-in-charge and 1 adult employed as a cleaner/domestic staff working at the service 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 area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety and premises. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (2) and (4), regulation 11, regulation 19 (1)(a), regulation 23, regulation 25, regulation 29(d); however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 29 (c) and (e). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 the day of inspection, an Immediate Action Notice was delivered to address immediate concerns for Safe Sleep outlined in regulation 23 in the report.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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 for the 17 staff members named on the staff roster for the week of 12/6/2023 were reviewed.

(a) Ten staff members had 2 written and validated references from a past employer.

Four staff members had 1 written and validated reference from a past employer.

(b) Three staff members had 2 written and validated references from a source other than a past employer.

Four staff members had 1 written and validated reference from a source other than a past employer.

(c) The required Garda vetting documents were available for inspection in the 17 files reviewed.

(d) Six staff members who required international police vetting, had it on file and available for inspection.

(4)

There was documentary evidence to show that the 16 childcare staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The person-in-charge was not assigned to a care room but was available to provide care and cover break times in the care rooms as needed.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection. Staff rosters were available for inspection.

Room Name	Number of children & Age range	Number of adults present
Junior Wobbler	5 Age, 1 – 1.5 years	2
Senior Wobbler	13 Age, 1 year 5 months – 2.5 years	3
Toddler	10 Age, 2.5 -3 years	3
Pre-Montessori	14 Age, 3 – 4 years	3
Montessori	16 Age, 4 – 5 years	3

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

- In the Junior Wobbler and Senior Wobbler rooms, Staff members were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and during activities helping with block building, reading stories, and engaging the children in conversations about the activity, for example discussions about farm animals were heard while playing with the associated toys.
- Positive engagement between caregivers and children were observed in the garden. Staff were singing rhymes with the children and were reaffirming what action the child was saying or doing, maintaining eye contact, nodding their head and smiling to the child.
- Mealtimes were relaxed and the children sat at low tables and were not rushed. Self-feeding was supported in the Senior Wobbler room and staff members were observed chatting with the children while supervising and giving assistance when needed.
- In the Senior Wobbler room, staff members supported children with hand hygiene before their lunchtime meal.
- Hand washing was observed in the Toddler room after coming in from the outdoor play area and before snack time.
- Nappy changing was carried out as needed and staff members were observed to ask each child "will we change your nappy" and to engage the children in conversation during the process.
- Coat hooks were accessible to the children to hang their belongings. Children were able to access drinking water on their own in the pre-Montessori room, fostering their independence.
- In each care room, there were an adequate number of tables and chairs. The size was appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children in each room.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs

1. In the Senior Wobbler room at lunchtime, 12 children sat around low-level tables for their lunchtime meal. One child had a plate, one child had a bowl, and 10 children did not have a plate or a bowl for their turkey wrap. The wrap was served onto the table. This practice is not conducive to creating a sense of belonging or give due respect to all the children.

Physical and material Environment.

Outdoor area:

2. Some of the toys and equipment available were not working. For example, there was only one push along activity centre available to the children from the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. This toy did not work when 2 children from the Toddler room were observed trying to use it and the picture displays were worn off. The hoola hoops were broken and the sandbox was empty.
3. There was no shaded area for the children to retreat to from the sunshine.

In the Pre-Montessori room

4. The materials that were available in the play kitchen area were limited, thus reducing the children's play opportunities including role play and associated interactions that can take place.
5. The dolls were dirty and did not have associated clothes, again limiting the opportunity to foster play experiences.

In the Montessori room:

6. The play kitchen area was not maintained, the area was chipped and worn, there were not enough utensils and items available, this could limit the play experience of the young child.
7. The art table was heavily marked and had a build-up of dust and dirt.
8. The cosy area consisted of two mats covered with a sheet, both were heavily stained and appeared dirty. Also, there was visible particles of dust and grit on the floor in this area.

In the Senior wobbler room:

- Some battery-operated toys available did not work. For example, a battery-operated toy Hoover, a ride on toy train and a tabletop activity.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Additional utensils purchased, correct utensils provided at meal times and staff have been retrained.
- New toys have been added to the garden.
- An awning has been placed in the garden for extra shade.
- Materials have been added to the home corner in the Pre-Montessori room.
- Dolls have been cleaned and materials have been added in the Pre-Montessori room.
- A new play kitchen has been placed in the Montessori room.
- The art table has been removed and replaced with a new art area in the Montessori room.
- The cosy area in the Montessori room has been updated and mats have been replaced with a tent for quiet time.
- Battery operated toys in the senior wobbler room have had their batteries replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances 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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- The procedure for soother care was inadequate. A staff member when asked to outline the procedure for sterilising soothers which did not follow the manufacturer's instructions for the use of the sterilising agent.

Safe Sleep:

- The air temperature in the care rooms and the cot rooms were not maintained between 16 and 20 °C while children were sleeping and within a range of 18 to 22 °C during activities.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on the day of inspection and a response was received the following day with an outline of plans to address the non-compliances.

It is acknowledged that external temperatures on the day of inspection reached 28°C.

The table below shows some of the readings taken on the day of inspection.

Room	Time	Temperature Degrees C (°C)
Montessori room	11.22am	27.8 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	11.49am	28.0 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	12.43pm	29.1 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
Pre Montessori	11.25am	26.8 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	11.51am	26.6 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe It was 24.8 °C on the monitor in the room.
	12.14pm	26.3 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	1.03pm	28.1 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe.
Cot room 1	1.08pm	23.6 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe and 8 children asleep It was 23.6 °C on monitor in cot room.
Toddler room	11.47am	27.5 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	12.41am	27.6 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe while children sleeping
Cot room 2	12.54pm	22.2 °C on the wall monitor

		1.06pm	24.1 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe and 4 children sleeping
	Junior Wobbler Room	11.35am	25.3 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe
	Senior Wobbler Room	1.10pm	25.8 °C on Inspectors air temperature probe

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff have received refresher training on soother care

Safe Sleep:

2. Air conditioning units and additional fans have been placed in the rooms. Heat reflective tint has also been placed on the windows to limit the exposure to heat.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Evidence was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspectorate

Safe Sleep:

Evidence was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspectorate

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances under regulation 23

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

(1)
First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates were available for 5 staff members. Expiry dates ranged from Oct 23, Dec 23, Jan 24, May 24 & June 24.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
1. The ventilation system in the shared nappy changing area between Junior Wobbler and Senior Wobbler rooms were ineffective as there was a foul smell in the area for the duration of the inspection.

The five care rooms, both cot rooms and the sanitary facilities were not adequately ventilated. The air in the nappy changing rooms was stale and foul smelling, vents in the ceiling were ineffective. The air in the care rooms was hot and stale, and despite some windows being open the air didn't freshen up during the day. See table in Regulation 23 Safe Sleep non-compliances above for further details.
- (d)
2. Some rooms and common areas were not maintained, for example, paint was chipped and walls were dirty in the Senior Wobbler room, Montessori room, first floor hall area and hallway leading to the sanitary facilities on the first floor.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c)

1. The ventilation system has been serviced and quarterly checks will take place.

(d)

2. The whole service has been painted.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances under regulation 29