

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS245
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Name of Service:	Once Upon A Time
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Address of Service:	Arena Creche, Whitestown Way, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 K223
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Marie McCormack, David McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	30/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	60
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Condon & R Phillips
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service is located in an urban setting within a mixed development comprising of apartments, commercial and retail units in Southwest Dublin and is one of nine services operated by the registered provider. A service is registered to provide care to children aged between 1 and 6 years. The service is open on Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18.30. The premises operates over three floors comprising of 5 care rooms, 2 on the ground floor and 3 on the second floor and an outdoor play area on the third floor.

Staffing

There were sixteen adults present on the day of inspection. Thirteen adults were working directly with the children. The manager and assistant manager were available to assist in rooms where required.

On inspection a training manager was present. An area manager and operations manager arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival and all three managers assisted in care rooms during the inspection.

A domestic staff member was also present.

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

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, staff members 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) There was a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced for the inspection. The named person in charge remained on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place. The manager and staff demonstrated an awareness of their roles and lines of authority within the service.

The recruitment records of ten adults recruited since the last inspection dated 30th September 2024 were reviewed. An additional nine Garda vetting records were reviewed in line with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(2)(a)(b)

There were twenty written validated references available.

(c)

Garda vetting records were available for twenty adults and were in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults.

(d)

International Police vetting was available for nine adults who had lived outside of the State for a period exceeding 6 months.

(4)

All adults who were involved in the direct care of children had 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.

(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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(2) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were twelve adults providing direct care to sixty-two pre-school children who were cared for in five care rooms. The manager and assistant manager was present to provide assistance when needed.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises during the inspection and the staff roster indicated that there are at least 2 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;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information listed above (1)(h) - (k) in relation to the service.

(3) A record listed above (1)(h) - (k) were available for inspection.

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 kitchen was inaccessible to children.
 - All cleaning agents were kept out of reach of children.
- Individual care plans were in place for children with specific medical needs where required.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch, after using the toilet and after outdoor play. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed in accordance with the service's infection control policies and procedures.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers, and they were sterilised daily.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No child received medication during the inspection. The staff members were knowledgeable of the procedure to be used if needed and documentation was reviewed which demonstrated that the procedure was adhered to.
- Written parental consent was available should temperature reducing medication be required to be administered to a child.
- All medication was stored in a safe place and was clearly labelled for each individual child.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a sleep log was maintained every 10 minutes by staff detailing the physical checks carried out on sleeping children under 2 years of age.
- The temperature of the sleep room and the care rooms where children slept was in the acceptable range.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed. The procedure for evacuation was on display in each room.
- Records were available of monthly fire drills carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

In the outdoor area a gate which led to a public terraced area was unlocked. An unauthorised adult could enter this area posing a risk to the children. It is acknowledged that children are supervised at all times while outdoors and would not be able to exit independently as the latch was out of their reach.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

We have locked the gate and added a chain lock for additional security. The key is kept at the top of the stairs for easy access in case of a fire or other emergency

The management team check the garden on each morning and carry out a garden risk assessment before entering the garden to ensure the gate is securely closed

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection in relation to 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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) Four adults trained in First Aid Response were present and immediately available to the pre-school children.

(2)

(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the pre-school room.

(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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 fire fighting 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)

A record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 26th of June 2025.

(b)

A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment, and smoke alarm which were both dated 20/06/2024.

(4)

Notices were displayed in conspicuous positions, detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

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

The children attending the service were supervised at all times while they were in the indoor and outdoor areas during the session.