

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:	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/09/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	01/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	53	PM	52
Day 2	AM	53	PM	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and S Quigley
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

This full day care service is located in an urban setting within a mixed development comprising of apartments, commercial and retail units in South West Dublin and is one of nine services operated by the registered provider. A service is provided to children aged between 1 and 6 years. The service is open on Monday to Friday between 7:30am and 6.30pm hours. 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 seventeen adults present on the day of inspection and of these eleven were working directly with the children. The manager and assistant manager were available to assist in rooms where required.

On arrival on day one of the inspection a training manager was present. The area manager and operations manager arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival and all three managers assisted in care rooms throughout the inspection on day one.

On day two there were sixteen adults present, eleven of which worked directly with the children, the manager and assistant manager were also available to assist in rooms when required. The area manager and operations manager were also present on the inspector's arrival on day two.

A domestic staff member was also present on both days 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 26.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 ...As a result, the scope of the inspection included a sample of child records.

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 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

The recruitment records of eleven staff members recruited since the last inspection dated 12th January 2024 were reviewed. An additional seven 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 nineteen validated references available from a past employer for eleven adults and three verified references from a source other than a past employer for three staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting records were available for eighteen staff members 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 ten adults who had lived outside of the State for a period exceeding 6 months.

(4)

All adults who required a qualification had one available for inspection at a minimum Level 5 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service. On the both days of inspection, there were fifty three children present in the service being supervised by eleven adults.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*

- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

A sample of sixteen records were reviewed by the inspectors.

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above Regulation for all the records reviewed.

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

Staff reported that all meals are provided by the service for the children. All children are offered breakfast on arrival and beans and crackers were provided during the morning, a hot meal and a further snack was provided in the afternoon. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the day. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance with eating their meals. Staff were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and engaging in conversation with children promoting a relaxed and sociable atmosphere.

Children who wore nappies had these changed at scheduled times and in between when needed. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently. Inspectors observed staff using these times as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.

Children were observed moving freely, exploring their environment, playing and engaging in activities. The children's rooms were laid out with designated interest areas including home-corners, construction areas, messy play and cosy areas. Materials and equipment were appropriate for the developmental stages of the children. Children's clothes were also changed when wet or soiled.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name and interacted with them in a positive manner using gentle tones and positive language. The staff comforted children promptly if they became upset, offering reassurance and cuddles. There was a key worker system in place which helped support the children further. Staff used a software application to communicate with parents/guardians providing individual reports on children's day on food 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 providers had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service and all other entrance and exits were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored safely out of reach of children. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. There were no hazards identified in the indoor or outdoor play environments.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers which were appropriately stored until sterilised after use. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a medication administration policy in place and when interviewed staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.

A detailed support plan was in place for children who required emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

Staff had a clear understanding of the safe sleep policy which safeguards the children when sleeping. Cots and low-lying beds were available for the children to sleep appropriate to their age and stage of development. Sleep checks were conducted and recorded on the children at 10-minute intervals.

Fire Safety:

Staff were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. Regular fire drills were conducted in the service. All emergency exits were kept clear from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. During observation of two nappy changes a staff member did not wash their hands or the child's following the nappy changing posing a risk of cross contamination.
2. In the Senior Wobbler and Toddler rooms children were observed swapping food and drinks and sharing spoons. This poses a risk of cross contamination.
3. The lacquered surface on the wooden partitions in the upstairs sanitary accommodation was missing exposing a porous damp surface which can't be cleaned effectively. There was an obvious malodour present.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Additional training was carried out with staff and spot checks carried out regularly ensuring all steps are followed correctly. Ongoing spot checks and ongoing training to further prevent a non-compliance reoccurring. Training & Development manager, manager & Assistant managers are completing ongoing spot checks and the nappy changing steps are printed, laminated and displayed on the wall to further prevent a non-compliance recurring.
2. Training Manager has retrained the staff in the following policies; Health and Safety Policy, Supervision Policy, Infection Control and ensuring the staff are interacting and engaging with the children during meal times. Managers and assistant managers are completing daily spot checks ensuring staff are always sitting with the children to further prevent this from recurring.
3. Area has been sanitised and cleaned thoroughly, the affected wooden partitions were replaced, repainted and tiles were fitted to ensure no dampness gets through to the wood. The domestic mops and dries the

floor effectively, the manager checks all areas of the premises and reports any repair needs to the company's maintenance man immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Documentation signed that nappy changing and handwashing checks were carried out and training identified.
2. Signed statements from staff that they read and understood the policies.
3. Photograph of repaired wooden partitions.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting evidence was reviewed by the inspector and meets the requirement of 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) On the day of inspection two adults were trained in First Aid Responder and available to the children in the event of an incident requiring first aid.

(2) (a) (b)

The registered provider had ensured that all care rooms had access to a fully stocked first aid box that was located in an accessible place and available to the children as required.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record in writing was available of fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 20th September 2024.
 - (b) A record was available on the day of inspection detailing that the firefighting equipment was serviced on the 26th June 2024 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 26th September 2024.