

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY035
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Name of Service:	Bunny Hops Creche and Montessori LTD
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Address of Service:	13 St. Brendan's Ave, Artane, Dublin 5
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Delaney
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	21
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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 & R. Duff
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

Bunny Hops Creche & Montessori is a privately owned full day care service located in a residential area in Dublin 5. The service offers care and education to children aged 1-5 years and participates in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme. The service is located in an adapted residential property and is registered to open from 7:30am-6pm Monday to Friday however the service currently operates from 8am-6pm. The service consists of three care rooms; Playgroup room, ECCE Room 2 and Montessori room, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, and a staff room/office. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises

Staffing

The service employs a total of 5 staff including the registered provider, 3 childcare staff and a relief staff member who is not rostered to work daily but provides cover in the service as needed. Three staff were present in the service when the inspectors arrived, and the cover staff member arrived at 10:29am at the request of the registered provider.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

- Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment,
- Regulation 11 Staffing levels,

- Regulation 16 (i) (j) (k) Record in relation to the preschool service,
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of the child,
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under

- Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
- Regulation 27 Supervision

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
 - (b) Discussion with management showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
- (2) A review of the staff files and discussion with management and staff showed that there are currently five adults employed in the service who work directly with the children including the registered provider. The files of all five adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. A Garda vetting declaration was also reviewed for the service owner who attended the service for a brief period on the morning of the inspection.
- (a) (b) Nine written and verified references were available for four adults currently employed in the service.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five adults employed in the service and the service owner. The service has also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that five adults who work directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (b) One written reference was available for one staff member however there was no evidence to show that these had been verified. Written references should be verified to ensure they are genuine and to obtain additional information about a potential employee.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (b) The reference has been verified. All documentation will be correct in the files.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the verified reference was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not ensure that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times which prevented the children from receiving adequate care and attention in relation to their individual needs. The following was observed;
- Children were left unsupervised in the Montessori and ECCE 2 care rooms on the morning of the inspection. Please see regulation 23.1 for further information.
 - Children's play was continually disrupted to facilitate the use of the toilet by other children in the group as no cover was available. Please see regulation 19 for further information.
 - Nappy changing was not completed in line with the needs of the children. Please see regulation 19 for further information.
- (2) Ratios were not maintained in the service during the day. The following was observed;
- Discussion with staff regarding their arrival times on the morning of inspection showed that only two staff were present in the building between 8am and 9am when the third staff member's shift started. According to the children's attendance log 20 children were present in the service at 8:30am. Three adults were required to meet the ratio.
 - In ECCE 2 room from 12pm onwards one adult was caring for eight children; three of whom were 2 years old and five of whom were three years old. Two adults are required in line with the individual ages of the children present.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) A relief staff member has now committed to full time employment. A new staff member is due to start in two weeks. Interviews are under way for a second staff member.
- (2) We have two extra staff now at 8.30am. The registered provider will assist in the rooms to maintain ratio and will ensure ratios are maintained at the correct level at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Information relating to the new staff member and a copy of the current roster which includes two additional staff scheduled to work daily.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 11. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

(j) A sample of three medication administration records were available for review and were complete in full.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) The staff roster was incorrect and did not adequately reflect the working hours of the staff present for example;
- The working hours of two staff members present when the inspections arrived were not accurate; one staff was rostered to work 8:30am- 5:30pm and advised the inspectors their hours were 9am-6pm while the other staff member was rostered 9am-6pm but advised inspectors their work hours were 8am-5pm.
 - One staff member was rostered to work 8am-5pm but the registered provider advised the inspectors that the person was on leave.
 - One staff member was rostered to work 10am-6pm daily however this person advised that they do not work daily and only attend the service when requested on an ad hoc basis.
- This was a non-compliance in the previous inspection in November 2022. The actions proposed by the registered provider have not been sufficient to prevent recurrence.

(k) A sample of 3 accident and incident forms were reviewed. The following was observed;

- The surname of children and staff is not being consistently recorded on the forms and was not observed on two of the forms. This is required to ensure the correct identification of each child should the records be recalled in future.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (i) The registered provider will ensure that the Roster reflects the daily staff correctly.
- (k) The registered provider has discussed this with the team and advised them that all forms in future must have full names recorded and will monitor this situation on an on-going basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the roster has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 16.

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:

- Mealtimes were a social occasion. Staff in the ECCE 2 room were observed sitting chatting with the children while they ate.
- A window blind beside the nappy changing unit in the downstairs toilet was closed during nappy changing to maintain the privacy and dignity of the children.
- Staff soothed a child who was upset at nap time reassuring the child they were ok and the staff member was here.

Physical and Material environment:

- Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities comfortably.
- Soft mats and cushions were available in the Playgroup and ECCE 2 rooms for children to rest during the day.
- The outdoor area had a range of equipment and materials which supported a range of play experiences for example there was a plastic pirate ship, ride on toys, and a tunnel. This range of equipment supported the children gross motor development. All of the children were provided with an opportunity for outdoor play on the day of inspection.

Supporting Relationships with Children:

- Staff were supportive and respectful in their interactions with the children. They were observed to use low tones and speak to children calmly.
- Photos of the children were displayed in the care rooms for example family wall displays and activity displays. This supports the children's sense of identity and belonging.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

1. Drinks were inaccessible to the children on the day of inspection for example in the play group room children's beakers were stored on a high shelf while in ECCE 2 individually labelled cups were available on a high shelf. Drinks should be freely available to children throughout the day. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in November 2022. The corrective action provided by the registered provider has not been maintained; the registered provider advised this is due to children spilling their drinks.
2. Children's faces were not cleaned in a timely manner following mealtimes for example a child was observed with dried food on it at 10:45am following dinner and at 11:15am the child's face had not been cleaned and the dried food was still present.
3. Nappy changing was not completed in a timely manner in the playgroup room a child's nappy was observed to be bulky and full and visibly hanging down at 12:30pm. The daily routine shows that nappy changing occurs between 9:00/9:30am and 12:/12:30pm. Although there was no record of the children's nappy changes documented in their daily communication books the staff member advised that nappies were changed at 9am and that once the registered provider was finished covering a lunch break the nappies would be done. Nappy changing commenced at 12:45pm.

4. Due consideration was not given to the impact of a change in schedule on the children present in the service for example the staff member in the Montessori room noted that the children were a bit upset when dinner was served 1.5 hours early as they wanted to engage in their scheduled free play time. A structured daily routine provides children with a sense of order, security and comfort, significant schedule changes disrupt this and can impact the children's sense of wellbeing.
5. Children play was continually disrupted in ECCE 2 room as no additional staff were available. For example, at 10:34am eight children were observed playing in the garden when one child asked to use the toilet. The staff member advised the children that they had to go into the toilet; one child was observed to protest as they did not want to leave their game. This was observed to happen frequently throughout the day. The needs of the individual children were not facilitated. Children's play provides valuable learning experiences in which they develop and extend knowledge frequent disruptions prevent this from happening.
6. Although it was recognised that the service had ample toys and equipment to provide a range of play experiences, many of the materials are stored on high shelves out of reach of the children for example in the playgroup room the materials accessible to the children was limited to a box of rattle toys, a box of cars, 5 large vehicles, 4 bead runners, 1 Elmo toy, a play kitchen a some props all other materials such as books, musical instruments, animals and blocks were stored out of reach of the children. The registered provider noted during feedback that children can point to the toys if they want them however having to ask for materials limits the children's opportunity to engage in spontaneous play experiences. This was a non-compliance in the previous inspection in November 2022. The corrective actions have not been maintained.
7. The programme of activities in the service did not provide engaging and enriching play experiences and was primarily adult led for example the children in the playgroup room were provided with musical instruments at 10:10am, followed by books and rattle toys at 10:45am, musical instruments at 11:45am followed by blocks as all the children started to wander away from the music activity, books at 12:30pm until 12:55pm. During these activities children were observed to wander around the room and some appeared disinterested in the provided activities. In ECCE 2 room children engaged in tabletop activities at 10:54am followed by story time at 11:35am, at 11:58 children moved back to the table and were provided with jigsaws until 12:24pm when children lay on the floor for meditation time. Children were observed sitting at the table at 1:10pm to complete an art activity.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Place all the children's drinking cups at a lower level. The registered provider will ensure that the drinking cups in all rooms are at a lower level at all times.
2. The registered provider restated to staff that all children's faces must be clean after every meal and will continue to monitor this practice.
3. The registered provider will ensure that nappy changing is done at the correct time and has taken on one new teacher, and is interviewing for a second staff member. The extra staff will ensure there is cover when needed. The registered provider will ensure the service always has enough staff to cover when needed.
4. The registered provider has ensured that this will not occur again. The service has a designated kitchen staff who will provide meals at scheduled times. The service will always have designated staff cover to prepare meals at schedule times.
5. The service is now back to ratio and the registered provider has advertised for an additional member of staff. At this present time, the registered provider is assisting the ECCE teacher. The registered provider will ensure the service has adequate staff at all times. If needed, we will advertise for staff or close another room.
6. The service have now put more of the toys on floor area. Staff will continue to put more toys, books etc on the lower level.
7. The teacher will try to facilitate the needs of each child. Staff have put more toys, books and activities boards on the lower part of the wall. This will enable the children to have more extended play. Activities will be more child led.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photo provided
2. No evidence provided
3. New staff details provided and updated roster to reflect current staffing
4. Details of kitchen staff reviewed
5. Roster showing current staffing
6. Photo provided
7. Photo provided

Summary Comment

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

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

A review of the food provided, discussion with staff and a review of the children’s daily communication books showed the registered provider did not ensure the children were provided with a varied diet in line with the service menu while in the service. The following was observed;

- The service has a one-week menu which was not observed to be followed.
- A selection of jars and tins were available for the daily hot meal including tinned lentil and vegetable soup, tinned vegetable soup, and jars of chunky vegetable pasta sauce and carbonara sauce and tikka sauce. The food and nutrition guidelines suggest restricting the use of packet soups and sauces due to the high salt content.
- Staff advised that the daily meals include wheat cereal for breakfast, a cracker and rice cake for snack and sandwiches, yoghurt and fruit for tea. A review of the children’s daily communication log showed that this is the food provided daily. The food and nutrition guidelines suggest children should be encouraged to try different food tastes on a regular basis.
- The dinner on the day of inspection was recorded on the food temperature check record as mixed vegetable stew however a review of the food available in the service and discussion with staff showed that the dinner service was tinned lentil and vegetable soup. Records should accurately demonstrate the food provided in the event of a recall notice and for communication with parents.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service are ensuring that all foods provided have fresh ingredients and restricting the use of products with salt. A three-week menu plan is in place. The registered provider now have extra staff designated to come in each day to prepare the hot meals.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of a three-week menu and staff information.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 22. This will be reviewed on the next 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 service entrance was secured on arrival staff attended the door to allow access which prevented unknown persons entering the service.
- The care room doors were secured to prevent children leaving the care rooms unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The outdoor area was adequately secured with high walls.
- Radiator covers were in place and adequately secured.
- Cleaning sprays were maintained out of reach.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and paper handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Nappy changing was complete in line with best practice and adequate handwashing was completed.
- Windows were open to allow fresh air to circulate.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.
- Cots and sleep mats were adequately spaced a minimum of 50cm apart.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.
- Bedlinen was stored in individually labelled bags.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were observed to be completed and adequately recorded.
- Mattresses and sleep mats were maintained in good condition.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Small light plastic bags were used to store jigsaw pieces in the montessori room. These bags were observed loose on the table while a child completed the jigsaws posing a potential risk of injury to the children who could access them.
2. A seat on a wicker chair in the playgroup room was observed to be broken with sharp pieces and wood staples sticking out. This posed a potential risk of injury of falls should the children climb on it and also cuts from the sharp pieces.
3. Toilets seats on the children' toilets in the downstairs sanitary facilities were observed to be ill fitting and posed a pinch risk to the children.

Infection Control:

4. The corners of the nappy changing mat were observed to be cracked and torn which prevented adequate cleaning and posed an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Small light plastic bags have been removed.
2. New chair has been purchased. Buy new items as needed.
3. These particular toilet seats are not readily available. A new seat was purchased. Buy new items as needed.

Infection Control:

4. New changing mat. Buy new items as needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs were reviewed in relation to points 2, 3 and 4.

Summary Comment

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

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 children were adequately supervised at all times throughout the day. Children were observed to be left unattended in care rooms on the morning of inspection which posed a potential risk to the children present. The following was observed:

- When the inspectors arrived at the door of the service at 9:46am a staff member was observed in the hallway. The staff member answered the door and after a brief interlude the inspectors entered the service at 9:48am and greeted the registered provider who had joined the staff member in the hall. The staff member took a child from the downstairs classroom and proceeded upstairs. During this time ten children were alone and unsupervised in the upstairs room.
- At 9:48am the registered provider proceeded to the kitchen to check the dinners which were laid out on the counter heated and ready for serving and advised a staff member was watching the children in the downstairs room where she was based. At 9:51am the inspector advised they were concerned that that the room was out of ratio and advised they would accompany her to the room. On entering the room five children were observed alone in the care room. The registered provider advised the door to the other care room was open and the staff member was watching them, however the door between the rooms was observed to be closed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff will not leave a room unattended. The registered provider will ensure there are adequate staff to cover each room. If a teacher needs to leave a room, there will be another member of staff to cover.

Supporting documentation submitted

Roster showing current staffing level and information on new staff member who is due to start.

Summary Comment

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