

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY046
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Name of Service:	Castle Creche
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Address of Service:	St. Anthony's House, Off St Lawrence Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rachel Doyle
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	26/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	42
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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

Castle Creche is a privately operated full day care service located on the first floor of a recreation centre in a residential area in Dublin 3. The service is open from Monday to Friday, 8am-5:45pm catering for up to 50 children aged 0-6 years. The service comprises of four care rooms, a cot room, sanitary facilities, and an office which is located in a cabin to the rear of the premises. The care rooms include; the baby room which caters for children aged 1-1.5 years, Toddler room which caters for children aged 1-2years, Playschool room which caters for children aged 2-3years and the Montessori room which caters for children aged 3-5years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service used a large green space to the rear of the building for outdoor activities.

Staffing

Fifteen staff are currently employed in the service including the registered provider. Eleven staff were present on the day of inspection. All staff present were working directly with the children.

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;
Regulations 9(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,
Regulation 16(1)(i)(j)(k),
Regulation 19 (1)(b), (3) Health, Welfare and Development of child,
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child,
Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance,
Regulation 29 (d)(e) Premises.

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under;
Regulation 19 (1)(a).

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under;

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment,
- Regulation 16 Records in relation to the preschool service,
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child,
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

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, 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 15 staff employed in the service including the registered provider and 14 early years practitioners.

The files of five staff who commenced employment since the last inspection were reviewed along with Garda vetting disclosures for all staff currently employed.

(a)(b) Ten written and validated references were available in relation to 5 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 15 staff members currently employed in the service.

(d) Police vetting was available for 4 staff members 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 five 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)(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff member has applied for police vetting. Police vetting will be obtained for all staff who have lived outside of Ireland.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above was reviewed.

Summary Comment

Regulatory compliance remains outstanding for Regulation (9)(2)(d) as evidence of the processed police vetting documentation has not been submitted to the inspector to date.

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) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of staff were available to the children on the day of inspection; eleven staff were caring for 42 children.

(2) The registered provider ensured that ratios were maintained throughout the day. The following was observed;

- In the baby room 2 adults were caring for 4 children aged 9-17 months.
- In the Toddler room 2 adults were caring for 9 children aged 1.5-2 years old.
- In the Playschool room 2 adults were caring for 11 children aged 2-3 years old.
- In the Montessori room 2 adults were caring for 18 children aged 3-4 years old.

Three additional adults arrived later in the day to cover breaks.

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

(1)

(i) The service has a staff roster which detailed the working hours of all staff and was reflective of those present on the day.

(j) A sample of 12 medication administration records were reviewed and found to be completed in full.

(k) A sample of 12 accident and incident records were reviewed and found to be completed in full.

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

(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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The following appropriate and suitable care practices were observed:

- Practices such as mealtimes, nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely and pleasant experiences for the children.
- Mealtimes were calm and relaxed, and staff were observed to sit with children while they ate, offering help where needed and babies were observed to be held while bottle feeding.
- Staff supported older children to complete self-care tasks such as nose wiping while staff in the baby and Toddler rooms were observant of these needs in relation to the younger children, frequently cleaning their noses.
- Staff engaged with the children in a warm manner and responded immediately to children who needed comfort or to tend to their care needs.

(3) The registered provider ensured that no practices which were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. The programme of activities and availability of toys and materials in the Toddler room was not adequate to support children's learning and development for example;

- No toys or play materials were accessible to the children in the care room; boxes of toys were observed to be stored in a large cupboard inaccessible to the children.
- The daily routine showed allocated times for adult led activities for example on the day of inspection the activities were; Circle time 9am-10am, Lego, cars, garage, and construction tools 2pm-3pm and 4pm-5pm home corner, babies and buggies. Children were observed wandering around the room between care practices and were not observed to access any toys until 1:50pm when a staff member took out some ride on cars and buggies. Discussion with the staff showed that toys are kept out of reach to support “room management” however this was observed to instigate minor altercations among the children.
- The table and chairs in the room was not accessible to the children between meals as the table was pushed against the wall and the chairs stacked; access to tabletop activities is important for building core strength. This was also observed in the playschool room.

The service policy details having defined interest areas an accessibility of toys and equipment to the children to support and encourage learning and development. The structure of the daily programme of activities prevented children from making choices and engaging in spontaneous play experiences which are required for development.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A new weekly/daily routine has been implemented in the Toddler room. The routine provides choice and more options for the children as to what they would like to do. New shelves were purchased so toys are accessible to the children throughout the day; a kitchen corner and builders’ section have been created. The table and chairs will be left available at all times. This was discussed with staff at the staff meeting. A review of the room will be conducted monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photo of the “kitchen corner” was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed 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.

Compliance Information

- The service has a healthy eating policy and the food provided was observed to be in line with the policy.
- The service has a weekly menu for snacks while dinner which is provided by an outside company is rotated on a three-week menu.
- Children were observed to be offered meals and snacks at regular intervals throughout the day for example children received a snack at 9:30am, dinner at 11am, 2:30pm teatime and an afternoon snack at 4pm.
- Snacks in the service were observed to consist of two food groups and varied daily.

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 door was adequately secured which prevented unauthorised person entering the building while a high handle prevented the children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning supplies were stored out of reach of the children throughout the service.
- Toys were maintained in good working order and free from hazards.
- Nappy changing units were sturdy and secure for changing children.
- Highchairs were maintained in working order for use during mealtimes in the baby room.
- Childrens food brought from home which contained perishable items were stored appropriately in the fridge in each care room.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities used by the baby, playschool and montessori rooms to facilitate adequate handwashing.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers when not in use.
- Sheets and blankets were individual to each child and stored in individual labelled boxes when not in use. Staff reported that these were laundered weekly or as needed with spare items available.
- Children’s care items were stored in individually labelled baskets and barrier creams were available and clearly labelled for each child.

Administration of Medication:

- A health care plan was available for a child who required emergency medication and staff were knowledgeable of the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Medication was clearly labelled and stored out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleeping children were physically checked by staff every 10 minutes and this information was recorded on a software application.

Fire Safety:

- Both fire escapes were maintained clear and free from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A cable from an electric fan was observed to trail at a level accessible to the children in the Toddler room and posed a risk of injury should the children pull on the flex.

Infection Control:

2. Five cot mattresses were observed to be torn at the corners exposing the inner foam. This prevented adequate cleaning and posed an infection control risk.
3. The nappy changing procedure observed was not in line with best practice or the service policy, for example neither the adult or child’s hands were observed to be washed following nappy changing and the nappy changing mat was not cleaned between nappy changes. This increased the likelihood of the spread of infection.
4. Children in the Toddler room did not have their hands washed before dinner which is contrary to the service policy and may increase the spread of infection.

5. The soap dispenser in the Toddler nappy changing area was empty and no other soap was available to support adequate hand hygiene.
6. A child in the Toddler room was observed to access and use a facecloth which had been used to clean another child's face after dinner, this posed an infection control risk.
7. Two cushions in the cosy area of the Toddler room did not have an easy to clean surface and were visibly soiled.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The fan has been moved to a higher shelf out of reach of the children. All appliances will be secured on high shelves and cables secured out of reach.

Infection Control:

2. New mattresses have been ordered. Frequent checks of sleep equipment will be carried out.
3. Staff have been reminded of the nappy changing procedure and a copy of the written procedure emailed to them. Staff will be re-trained regularly on the procedure.
4. Staff have been reminded of the handwashing procedure and a copy of the written procedure emailed to them. Staff will be re-trained regularly on the procedure.
5. Hand soap was replaced on the day of inspection, it had run out in the morning. Staff have been advised to inform management when soap is running low in the dispensers.
6. Facecloths will be placed out of reach of the children once used prior to laundering.
7. The cushions were removed. Soft furnishings will be reviewed on a weekly basis and disposed of if needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff were observed to attend the door to allow access to children and a written records were maintained of the time of arrival and departure of each child.

(3)(a) Staff attended the door to allow access to visitors which prevented unauthorised person accessing the service. A visitor record book was in use and the inspector was asked to sign in on arrival in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(d)

- The service was observed to be well maintained and appeared clean.

(e)

- The service had a sufficient number of sanitary facilities for the staff and children in attendance on the day of inspection.