

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY054
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Artane
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Address of Service:	Timber Mills, Kilmore Road, Artane, Dublin 5
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Eircode:	D05 C6V0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	28/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 7th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes & C. Harte
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

Cocoon Childcare Artane is a full day care service located in a residential area in Dublin 5. It is one of 15 services operated by the registered provider. The service operates from a purpose-built building and is open from 7:30am-6:30pm Monday to Friday. The service offers care and education to children aged 0-6years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service is comprised of five care rooms; Baby room, Wobbler room, Toddler room, Junior Preschool room and Preschool room, an office, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, and a staff room. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 17 staff to work in the service including the person in charge and deputy person in charge, 13 early years practitioners and two kitchen staff. A senior management team are also employed by the registered provider and attended the service regularly. Thirteen staff were rostered and present on the day of inspection. An area manager attended the service at 11:40am to support the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection under Regulation 23 in relation to an identified safety risk. A written response which mitigated the risk was received on 29th August 2024. Further details are available under Regulation 23.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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

(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) The roster showed that a designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection.
 - (c) The service had a management structure with clear roles and responsibilities for staff members.
- (2) A review of the roster and discussion with management showed that there are currently nineteen adults employed in the service including two area managers. The files of all staff members were reviewed as part of the inspection.
- (a) (b) Thirty-six written and verified references were available for nineteen staff members currently employed in the service.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for nineteen staff members. 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 ten staff who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that seventeen staff members 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) (d) An international child protection certificate (ICPC) was not available in relation to one staff member who previously lived abroad for a period of more than 6 months as an adult. It is acknowledged that a standard police check record was held on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d) The ICPC has been requested by the staff member, however due to an error on the application form, it is currently still being processed. All relevant staff, who need an ICPC, are required to produce it during the recruitment process

Supporting documentation submitted

Confirmation of an application has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has attempted to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) however as the ICPC has not been received regulatory compliance remains outstanding. The registered provider is required to submit the ICPC to the inspectorate when it is received for review.

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 were 48 preschool children being cared for by ten adults on the morning of inspection with 44 children present in the afternoon. The person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to cover breaks and assist in the care rooms as required. The area manager also assisted in rooms to support ratios during staff breaktimes.

(2) Ratios were maintained during the inspection. The following was observed:

- In the Baby room four children aged 11-13 months present in the morning and five children aged 11-15 months present in the afternoon were being cared for by two staff members.
- In the Wobbler room ten children present in the morning and seven children present in the afternoon aged 15-22 months were being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room six children aged 2-2.5 years were being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Junior Preschool room six children aged 2.5-3 years were being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room twenty-one children present in the morning and twenty children present in the afternoon aged 3-5 years months were being cared for by 3 staff members.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The service had a healthy eating policy and provided all food in line with a four-week menu. The menu on the day of inspection included; a variety of cereals for breakfast, pear and yoghurt for mid-morning snack, sweet chilli chicken and rice for dinner, Homemade madeira buns for mid afternoon snack and herby pasta bake for tea.
- Mealtimes were a relaxed occasion and staff joined the children at the table and were observed to be responsive to the needs of the children in the care room for example in the wobbler room a child refused to eat the dinner and was provided with an alternative meals of potato and chicken while another child who was settling was reluctant to sit on the chair available so the staff brought in a suitable chair from the baby room which the child seemed more comfortable to try.
- Drinks were available to the children throughout the morning in each room and drinks were provided to the children with their meals.

- Nappy changing was done on a set schedule and as required to ensure the children's comfort. Staff spoke about the individual needs of the children in regard to the frequency of nappy changing and demonstrated additional nappy changes for children where required.
- Children enjoyed freedom of movement within the care rooms and were able to engage in a range of activities of their choosing.

Physical and Material Environment

- Child sized tables and chairs and low-level shelving were provided allowing children to access materials independently promoting choice and spontaneous play experiences.
- Children's photographs were displayed promoting a sense of identity and belonging in the care rooms.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff used low tones when speaking to the children and interactions between staff and children were observed to be kind, caring and respectful.
- Staff were attentive and responsive to the needs of the children throughout the day and responded to issues in a calm and relaxed manner.
- Staff engaged in the children's play supporting and encouraging learning.
- Staff were observed to support the children to be independent encouraging them to feed themselves and wash their hands with staff available to support as necessary.
- Staff record details about each child including meals, nappy changes, and sleep; this information was shared with parents on a daily basis promoting a strong staff/parent relationship.

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 throughout the day and staff were observed to attend the door to allow access to visitors which prevented unknown persons entering the premises.

- The nappy changing units were sturdy and secure for use.
- Radiators were mounted high on the wall out of reach of the children.
- Blind cords where present were secured out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning checklist and play area safety checklists were complete to date.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Nappy changing mats were maintained in excellent condition.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.
- Handwashing was observed to be completed frequently throughout the day for example before meals and following nappy changing.
- Windows were open to provide adequate ventilation in the care rooms and sanitary areas.

Administration of Medication:

- Detailed health care plans were available for two children who required emergency medication and staff were aware of the plan and actions required. The children's medication was stored out of reach in a clearly defined area and was easily located during the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in rooms where children over 1 year old were sleeping.
- Staff were observed to physically check sleeping children at 10 minutes intervals and a record of these checks was maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed throughout the service.
- Staff were knowledgeable of the evacuation plan in the event of a fire emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was not maintained in the preschool room on the day of inspection. The room temperature was recorded to be 25.1°C in the area nearest the toilets and 25.4°C in the area nearest the outdoor area at 12:30pm. This posed a risk to children's comfort. It is acknowledged that the

windows and door to the outdoor area were open to allow air to circulate and staff were observed encouraging children to remove jumpers as the room was warm. An immediate action notice was issued to the provider.

2. An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was not maintained in the following care rooms on the day of inspection;
 - The baby room temperature was recorded to be 23.4°C at 12:39pm.
 - The wobbler room temperature was recorded to be 22.2°C at 11:20am.
 - The Junior preschool room temperature was recorded to be 23.9°C at 12:05pm.
3. Plaster was observed to be peeling and flaking around a low handrail in the baby room. This posed a risk due to the age of the children and their tendency to put objects in their mouth.

Fire Safety:

4. Tyres which were used for play were observed to be blocking access to a gate in the outdoor area on the morning of the inspection. The gate formed part of the fire evacuation route, and this may have delayed the evacuation of children from the area in a fire emergency. It is acknowledged that the tyres had been moved away from the gate when the inspector went back out to the area.
5. The attendance record in the Wobbler room was not updated in a timely manner to reflect two children who went home at approximately 12pm. Accurate attendance records are required to ensure the safe evacuation and accounting of all children in the event of a fire emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An air conditioning unit has been purchased for the room and additional long-term measures are being enacted to reduce the temperature of the room. Mirrored heat reduction film has been placed on the windows in the preschool room, which has reduced the temperature in the room significantly on sunny days. The management team will continue to maintain temperatures within the centre and act accordingly, if necessary.
2. Mirrored heat reduction film will be applied to the baby room windows on 07/10/2024. The door between the toddler room and the junior preschool is kept open on warmer days to allow the cool air from the air conditioning unit to circulate through the room. Temperatures have been maintained in the wobbler room and the management team are working through a plan to install air conditioning units in the rooms

ahead of the warmer months. The management team will continue to maintain temperatures within the centre and act accordingly, if necessary.

3. The area around the rail in the baby room was sanded and painted and is no longer chipped.

Fire Safety:

4. The tyres in the garden, that had been used as part of a game, were moved from the fire exit gate during the inspection. Staff will continue to risk assess the garden and ensure that children do not place toys, in front of the fire exit gate, during play.
5. The management team have completed training with all staff to refresh the importance of signing children in/out in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

Images in relation to point 1 and point 3 were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address 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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) Children were observed to be brought to and collected from their individual care rooms by their parents on the day of inspection. An attendance register was available in each care room to record the children's attendance.
- (3)
- (a) The service entrance was adequately secured, and staff were observed to greet visitors at the door to allow access.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that a record of visitors to the premises was maintained for a period of one year.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) (b) The visitor book did not accurately document all required details of visitors to the service for example the time of departure and person who authorised access was not consistently recorded for all visitors.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) (b) There is an updated visitors book in place. The management team will ensure that all visitors are signed in/out by the manager, assistant manager or centre supervisor.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 24.

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

(2)

(a) (b) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises easily accessible to staff and out of reach of the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was immediately available to the children at all times during the opening hours, for example on the day of inspection there was no FAR trained staff rostered to work from 5:15-6:30pm which posed a potential risk to the children. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in 2021.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The staff roster has been updated to ensure there is a FAR trained staff member on the premises at all times. The manager will ensure to have a FAR trained staff member on the premises at all times, when completing the staff roster.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 25.