

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY074
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Name of Service:	An Cosán Early Years Whitehall
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Address of Service:	Swords Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D09 CK72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Genockey
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	T Nelson
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

An Cosán Early Years Whitehall is a full day care service located in on the north side of Dublin city and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 42 children aged 0 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service also operates a part-time service. The service is one of six services operated across Dublin by the registered provider.

An Cosán operates from a single storey purpose-built premises and has three care rooms to include the Baby Wobbler room (10 to 18 months old), Toddler room (2 to 3 years old) and Preschool room (2 years and 8 months to 5 years old). There are sanitary facilities located off each of the care rooms, and a cot room located off the Baby Wobbler room, a kitchen, an office and a family room. Further sanitary facilities are available for staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to front of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently ten staff employed by the service including the person in charge and deputy person in charge who manage the oversight of the service and provide cover where needed, seven childcare staff who work directly with the children and a kitchen staff member who can provide cover where needed in the rooms. All staff were present on the day of 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3) (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15(1) Record of a Preschool Child
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15(1) Record of a Preschool 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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not notify the Agency of a change of person in charge of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

A change in circumstance notification was submitted to the agency.

Preventive Action

In future a change in circumstances notification will be submitted as soon as circumstances change.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of application for a change in circumstance notification for the person in charge.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8(1) has been addressed.

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

(2) The staff roster was reviewed and discussed with the Service Manager. A total of ten staff were employed and these files were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Twelve validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Seven validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for ten staff members employed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that five adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

(4) Ten staff 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) A second written and validated reference was not available for 1 staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

A second written validated reference for 1 staff member was sent to the reporting officer later that day after inspection.

Preventive Action

The service will ensure that all references are cross checked, and two references are in place for each member of staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of written validated reference submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2) has been addressed.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were ten staff available to the 30 children.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Seven staff were allocated to work directly with the 30 children who were present on the day of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Baby Wobbler room - 1 adults to 2 children aged between 10 to 16 months old.
- Toddler room - 2 adults to 10 children aged between 2 to 3 years old.
- Preschool room - 4 adults to 18 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.

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

(1) Following a review of a sample of 12 records, the registered provider ensured a record was maintained for each child in the service which detailed the particulars set out in (a) to (i).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture and equipment in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in attending, and was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such as home areas, mark making, construction, sensory, and library areas. These areas were well defined and labelled to be easily identifiable. Themed areas of interest facilitate children to have a more focused engagement in their play experiences.
- Each of the themed interest areas were well resourced with a wide range of props, materials and accessories accessible to the children, including a range of real-life props which can promote meaningful play experiences and extend play opportunities. This equipment facilitated a range of play experiences including creative, imaginative and language play and promoted exploration and curiosity.
- Images of the children and their families were displayed throughout the rooms, and children had labelled coat hooks and cubbies for their belongings.
- Daily routines were displayed and labelling with imagery and text was used effectively to signal where things belong. This can support a sense of comfort in knowing where things go and what will happen next.
- The outdoor environment was well resourced with a seating area, outdoor kitchen with range of props, a well-resourced water-play area and construction area. There was a range of ride in and ride on toys, with swings and slides. This equipment facilitated the development of fundamental movement skills such as running, climbing and balance.
- Children were provided with suitable outdoor clothing to support a comfortable outdoor play experience and aprons were available for sand and water play indoors.

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 following measures were observed to be in place:

General Safety:

- The main door to the service was secure on arrival and entry and exit was managed and monitored by staff. The internal door to the main corridor off the care rooms was secured by an electronic door release system. This restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Blind cords were observed to be secured with window restrictors on openable windows.
- Finger protectors were fitted on doors throughout the premises.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing was completed after outdoor play and before lunch.
- Liquid soap and thermostatically controlled warm water was available at all sinks used by the staff and children.
- Appropriate waste disposal units were available in the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Hygienic sleep practice was evident, for example cot mattresses in use were wipeable; children were provided with individual bed linen and low beds were positioned with appropriate space in between them.
- Staff and visitors to the baby room were required to wear shoe covers.

Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every ten minutes.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- All children were recorded accurately in the attendance log.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The radiator in the Baby Wobbler room which was accessible to children was hot to touch, and the inspector recorded a surface temperature of 44°C, which is higher than the recommended 43°C. This posed a potential scald risk.
2. A bottle of anti-bacterial spray was observed to be accessible to children in the Preschool room. This posed a potential risk to children.

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

Infection Control:

3. Appropriate hand drying facilities were not readily available in the sanitary facilities off the Baby Wobbler room and Toddler room. The roll of paper towel available required repeated hand touch increasing the potential risk of cross contamination.
4. The toilet roll in the middle cubicle in the sanitary facilities off the Preschool was not hygienically dispensed and the roll available required repeated hand touch.
5. The ventilation unit in the sanitary facility off the Baby Wobbler room was not operating, and the ventilation unit in the sanitary facilities off the Toddler room had a build-up of dust and debris which could reduce the effectiveness of unit.

Safe Sleep:

6. The temperature of the cot room was not maintained between 16-20°C whilst children were sleeping in line with Tusla's "Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months". The inspector recorded a temperature of 21.6°C at 10.11am while a child under 12 months old was sleeping.

This was identified as a non-compliance on the last inspection held on the 9 November 2022 and actions put in place failed to prevent a recurrence.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective actions:

1. The service informed staff of the importance of maintaining recommended radiator temperatures, and have reviewed their service policies and procedures regarding safety. Staff were reminded to keep an extra garment top on hand in case they are cold rather than increasing temperature of radiators.

- The service reminded staff to keep hazardous products out of children's reach. Labelled spray water bottles have been placed in the rooms to assist children in caring for their environment, such as wiping tables and placemats.

Preventive actions:

- The service will carry out regular checks of radiators temperature in the Baby/Wobbler room, to ensure they remain at a level for the safety of the children in the Room.
- The service reminded staff to keep hazardous products out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

Corrective actions:

- The service reminded staff of the potential of cross contamination; green cloths are now being used and laundered after each hand wash. Blue rolls are now dispensed appropriately.
- A new toilet roll dispenser has been fitted and is now in use.
- The ventilation units were replaced and are operational.

Preventive actions:

- The service will ensure there are an adequate supply of clothes for hand drying at the beginning of each day and bring them to the laundry room at the end of the day.
- The service ensure staff will report when equipment has been damaged to prevent future incidents. A Health and Safety training workshop will be put in place for Staff.
- Staff will report when the vent is not operating. Vent will be cleaned monthly to reduce dust buildup and to keep the vent running at full capacity. The cleaning template has been updated across all rooms

Safe Sleep:

- Corrective action:** The temperature in the cot room is regularly monitored and logged each day. To lower the temperature, steps are now being taken, such as slightly opening the window or room door until the temperature decreases.
- Preventive action:** To lower the temperature, steps are now being taken, such as slightly opening the window or room door until the temperature decreases.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Evidence of daily temperature checks on the radiator.
- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence.
4. Photographic evidence.
5. Photographic evidence. Evidence of cleaning template.

Safe Sleep:

6. Evidence of temperature logs of sleep room.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured the following:
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 25 October 2024.
 - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the smoke alarms in the premises which were maintained on the 10 April 2024.
- (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) There was no recent record available of the maintenance of the fire extinguishers.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The maintenance of fire extinguishers has been completed. All extinguishers have been serviced, and the maintenance receipt and invoice have been provided. A certificate is still pending and will be forwarded once received.

Preventive Action

The service has engaged a company to maintain the fire extinguishers and maintenance will be conducted on a yearly basis. Fire Certificate has been received for maintenance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of recent maintenance of fire extinguishers submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been addressed.