

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY219		
Name of Service:	The Rookery Creche and Montessori		
Address of Service:	60 Howth Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3		
Eircode:	D03 E427		
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicky Crowe		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	09/01/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM 38
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.		

Description of service

The Rookery Creche and Montessori is a privately owned service which operates from a converted residential unit in North Dublin. The service offers full daycare to children aged 0-6years from 8:15am-8:45am daily. The service is comprised of four care rooms on the ground floor and one on the first floor, a cot room, office, and a staff room. There are two enclosed outdoor areas one to the front of the building and one to the side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 11 staff and also works in the service. Eleven staff were present on the day of inspection including the registered provider who arrived to the service during the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby and Waddler rooms and did not include the other rooms.

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, 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)(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 person in charge showed that there are currently 12 adults employed in the service including the registered provider, service manager, 9 early years practitioners and one kitchen staff who also provides cover in the care rooms when needed. The files of all 12 staff were reviewed.

(a)(b) Twenty-four written and validated references were available in relation to 12 staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all/ number staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for eight adults 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 12 adults 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.

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 that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Nine adults were caring for 41 children when the inspector arrived in the service. Two further adults arrived later in the morning including the registered provider.

(2) Ratios were maintained on the day of inspection. The following was observed;

- In the baby room one adult was caring for two children aged 11-13 months.
- In the Waddler room one adult was caring for four children aged 14-18months.
- In the Toddler room one adult was caring for four children aged 18-24 months.
- In the pre-montessori room two adults were caring for ten children aged 2 years old.
- In the montessori room three adults were caring for twenty-two children aged 3-4 years old.

An additional adult was available to cover in the rooms as needed.

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

- Nappy changing was done on a set schedule and as needed to ensure the comfort of the children.

- Children were supported to maintain their personal hygiene for example staff assisted children to clean their noses throughout the day.
- Children were unrestricted in their movements throughout the day for example children in the baby room were placed in highchairs moments before their food was served and were removed from the highchair once they had finished eating.

Physical and material environment

- A range of toys and equipment were available in both the baby and Waddler rooms. For example, both rooms had a range of jigsaws, musical instruments, and sensory play items.
- A low-level table and chairs were available in the Waddler room allowing children to engage in mealtimes comfortably.
- A visual daily routine was displayed at a low level in the Waddler room supporting the children to understand the daily activities and “now” and “next”.
- Shelves were clearly labelled to show where toys are stored. This helps children develop organisational skills and supports early literacy skills.

Supporting relationships with children

- Staff interacted with children in a warm and pleasant manner.
- Staff shared details of the children’s day with parents via a software application including nappy changes and sleep times.
- Adult seating was available in the Baby room and the staff member was observed to sit and cuddle a child while they drank their bottle.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Two children in the baby room aged 11-13 months were not provided a developmentally appropriate opportunity to self-feed during dinner time. The children were observed sitting in highchairs adjacent to each other. The staff member stood in front of the children and fed each child one spoon of dinner at a time; alternating between the children. The bowls were kept on a low-level wall out of reach of the children; one child was observed gesturing and shouting toward the bowls in between spoon feeds. This is contrary to the service policy which states that “*Children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development*”. Self-feeding provides the children with an opportunity to explore different textures and develop independence.

- Children were unable to access their family photo books due to a table which was pushed against the ledge where they were displayed. One child was observed trying to reach across the table toward the books. Family photos promote children sense of identity and belonging and can be a source of comfort for young children. These should be easily accessible to the children as needed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Children under 1 year are now being let to feed themselves. All staff have been informed to let children under 1 year feed themselves.
- The unit containing the family photo books has been moved so children have clear access to it. Staff in the waddler room have been informed to make sure that the table is not put in front of the shelf for the photo books.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A photo of the new location of the family books was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified 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

- Dinner in the service is provided by an outside company. A weekly menu was available and displayed in the service.
- Milk was provided to drink at morning snack time and water was provided at other mealtimes.

Non-Compliance Information

- The registered provider did not ensure that the children in the Waddler Room were provided with adequate nutritious and varied food. For example, a review of the daily records and conversation with staff showed that children in the baby and Waddler rooms are offered cereal for breakfast at 9am, raspberries or sliced banana at 11am, a hot meal at 2:20pm and a yoghurt in the afternoon at 4pm. Staff

advised that if the children do not eat their fruit or yoghurt there is no additional food available. This is contrary to the service healthy eating policy which says alternative foods will be available. Young children should be offered two meals and two snacks per day spaced no more than three hours apart and which includes a variety of food. A healthy and suitable alternative should be available should children not eat the food provided. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in 2022. The preventive action submitted by the registered provider has not been maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A supply of additional food has been provided in each room for children for children to have at snack time. Children in our service are and have always been fed at regular intervals, less than the regulatory minimum 3-hour intervals. Stocks of alternative foods are checked and maintained by the manager of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A copy of the service healthy eating policy, images of snacks available and the email to parents advising them of the change was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 22.

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 entrance gate was secured on arrival to the service which prevented unauthorised persons entering the service and prevented children leaving unsupervised.
- The outdoor areas were secured to prevent children leaving or accessing unsafe areas.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The nappy changing unit on the ground floor was sturdy and maintained in good condition for use.
- Cleaning supplies were maintained out of reach of the children in the care rooms and sanitary areas.

Infection Control:

- Dispensed soap and paper handtowels were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Cleaning checklists were available and completed to date in the Waddler and baby rooms and sanitary areas on the ground floor.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.
- Cots and sleep mats were spaced a minimum of 50cms apart.
- Bed linen was stored in individual labelled bags when not in use. Mattresses which were used for folding cots were also stored in individual bags when not in use.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under 1 year were provided with cellular blankets for use while sleeping.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in rooms where children were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- Attendance records were completed in a timely manner ensuring an accurate record of the children on the premises.
- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- Staff were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. The water in the sink in the Waddler room was not thermostatically controlled and posed a risk of scalding to the children who were observed to use the sink for handwashing after snack. The water temperature was recorded to be 46.9°C at 10:37am.

Infection Control:

3. Handwashing was not completed in the Baby and Waddler rooms before morning snack as per the service policy. This posed an infection control risk.
4. Staff were observed to use their hand to open the pedal operated bin in the Waddler room. The bin was hung at adult head height on a hook which prevented it being used appropriately. The bin was used to dispose of contaminated items such as used tissues. Excessive handling of the bin lid posed an infection control risk.
5. A shelving unit and the wall behind the sinks in the nappy changing area on the ground floor did not provide an easy to clean surface which posed an infection control risk. Damage to both the paintwork and the shelving unit exposed a porous surface which could not be adequately cleaned.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for one staff which had expired was obtained. The dates of expiry of all staff garda vetting have been put on their files and diary reminder notes added to the manager's phone to remind to apply for vetting renewal.
2. A thermostat has been attached to the sink in the waddler room to control the water temperature. Water temperature to be checked regularly.

Infection Control:

3. Staff in the baby and waddler rooms have been reminded of the policy on hand washing, which is to be carried out before and after each meal, after nappy changes, after messy play, after garden play and as required. All staff have had refresher training on the hand washing policy and implementation of same will be monitored by the manager.
4. A replacement foot operated bin has been obtained for the waddler room. Bin provided.

5. Shelving unit in changing room has been replaced, and a protective surface has also been attached. The wall behind the sink has had a wooden frame attached and a tiler is due to attach tiles to this in the coming days.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Garda vetting declaration reviewed.
4. Image of foot pedal operated bin.
5. Image of unit and new tiles over sink area.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided 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) The registered provider ensured that each preschool child was checked into and out of the service, parents were observed to collect children from their care rooms. A written record of attendance was completed promptly as children arrived and exited the service.

(3)(a)(b) Entry to the premises was controlled through an intercom system and button release gate allowing staff to speak with visitors before allowing access which prevented people from entering the service without staff knowledge. A visitor record book was readily available in the entrance area and the inspector was asked to sign in on entering the premises.

(4) Visitor attendance logs were observed to be held for a period of one year.