

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DY270 |
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| Name of Service: | Carr's Child & Family Services |
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| Address of Service: | 5 Northbrook Road Ranelagh Dublin 6 |
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| Eircode: | D06HP28 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Christina Hughes |
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| Service type: | Full day care |
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| Date of Inspection: | 26/02/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 15 | PM | 4 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F |
| Inspection undertaken by: | R Duff |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

This childcare service, which is a registered charity, has been in operation in its current location since 1972 under the auspices of an organisation that was established in 1887 to provide support services to children and their families. The service is partly funded by Tusla (Child & Family Agency) and takes referrals from statutory agencies. Care and education is provided on a full day care and part-time basis for children aged birth to five years. The service operates from purposefully adapted premises in the basement of a large period house in a residential area of Dublin city. There are three separate care rooms provided for children consisting of a baby room, a toddler room and a large pre-school room which can be partitioned to provide two separate areas. There is a small cot room within the baby room. Enclosed outdoor spaces are available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are a total of eight staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. The person in charge does not work directly with the children but is available for support when necessary. On the day of the inspection, there were 5 staff caring for 15 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2) and (4)-Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(3) Staffing levels.

Regulation 15 Record of a child.

Regulation 19 -Health, Welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 25 First aid.

Regulation 26 Fire safety measures.

Regulation 28-Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection focused on the baby and toddler 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived to the service.
 (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

(2) Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that two adults on a work placement programme had commenced working in the service in September 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these two adults.

The files of the registered provider and seven staff who work in the service were also reviewed.

- (a) Eleven written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and seven staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for three staff members who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for six months or more as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that six adults who worked directly with the children in the service 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.

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 there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) During the Inspection, there were 5 adults caring for 15 children aged 7 months - 4 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;*
- (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) The records of 12 children who were attending the service were reviewed and contained the following particulars:

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which each child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) Names and contact details of other adults who were authorised to collect children were available.
- (f) The documentation available supported the recording of specific illnesses, allergies, disabilities and dietary preferences for children.
- (h) Parents had indicated which immunisations their children had received.
- (i) There was written parental consent for medical treatment of children in the event of an emergency.

(4) The registered provider was aware that the records referred to above must be retained for a period of two years after the child leaves the service.

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

(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.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection. Staff members were attentive and responsive to the needs of the children throughout the day and were observed to respond to children in a calm and relaxed manner throughout the inspection. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. The staff provided children with comfort when they became upset, holding them and talking to them in soft tones

Identity and belonging were promoted in the three care rooms with children's family photos, individual photos, birthday trains and artwork displayed on the walls and visible to children in the care rooms and corridors throughout the service. Individual daily reports were kept throughout the day to give to parents/guardians to provide for continuation of care. Children in the baby room were placed to sleep according to their individual routines and when they showed signs of tiredness. The sleep room was calm and conducive to sleep. Children who had soothers were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. The children attending the toddler room were provided with an opportunity to sleep and rest after dinner. Areas were provided within the three rooms where children could rest or take a break from activities.

Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. There was evidence that equipment and materials provided were based on the children's individual needs and emergent interests, for example, children in the toddler room had made rubble using lentils and paint to extend their interest in the current theme while children in the baby room enjoyed and activity using dry breakfast cereal. Suitable toys and equipment

were laid out on low level shelving and accessible to children.

The outdoor area was well equipped with a range of toys and materials to support play experiences.

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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was securely gated restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable, safe and secure with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.
- Anti-febrile medication and cleaning agents to include disinfectant sprays and liquids were stored on high shelves and in high cupboards.

Infection Control:

Measures were taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading.

- Soothers were kept in individual containers to avoid cross-contamination.
- Appropriate infection control measures were taken during nappy changing including the use of gloves, aprons, and thorough handwashing after changes. Waste was managed appropriately using pedal-operated bins.
- Each child was provided with their own bed linen, which was laundered weekly and stored individually between use.
- Warm water, soap and paper towels were available for handwashing and both staff and children washed their hands at regular intervals and as required.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored in their original packaging out of reach of children. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection.

Safe Sleep:

- Heavy clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Cellular blankets were used.
- Cot mattresses were fitted with a waterproof protector which provided an easy to clean surface.
- Children under two years of aged were provided with a cot for sleeping. Children over two years of aged were provided with their own individual sleep mat.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in the baby cot room for children under 1 year old. The temperature of the baby cot room was recorded at 19.7°C while three children slept at 11.50am.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one year old in toddler room. The temperature in the toddler room was recorded at 19.9°C while one child slept.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Floor tiles in the baby sleep room and lobby area between preschool room and outdoor space were observed to be cracked with pieces of flooring exposed. This caused the flooring to be uneven which posed a tripping hazard.
- A moses basket was present in the baby sleep room on the day of inspection, staff confirmed during discussions with the inspector that this cot was previously used for one of the baby's while they were under 6 months old. Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months identifies cots are required for all infants up to their first birthday. Travel or portable cribs are not permitted for use as sleeping facilities in early years services.

Infection Control:

- Adequate space of 50cm was not maintained between cots to limit the spread of infection. Two cots in the baby sleep room were positioned 15cms apart.

- A baby bottle without a lid, containing milk was observed to be left on top of a shelving unit from 2:30pm to 3.40pm.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The broken tiles in the cot room were replaced, and the service plans to change the broken tiles in the lobby area during Easter break when the service will be closed. Monitoring and maintenance of the tiles will be more frequent.
- The service has removed the Moses basket and will not permit the use of Moses baskets for sleep in the future.

Infection Control:

- The service has replaced two of the cots with smaller ones, there is now a 50 cm space between cots.
- The service has requested that parent no longer brings a milk bottle into the room as the children uses a cup. The service will only accept bottles with lids in the future and will ensure the bottles are stored correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Infection Control:

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider will address the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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

(1) The service provided evidence that an adult trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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)(a) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 13 February 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced on 12 February 2025. Smoke alarms were serviced on 12 February 2025.

(2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

(4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed on the door in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the full day service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the overall services offered on the premises with an expiry date of 30 January 2026.