

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY293
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Apple Blossom
-------------------------	---------------

Address of Service:	10 Leinster Square, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

Eircode:	D06 A500
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Una Fitzgibbon
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	15/02/2024
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	33
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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
Inspection undertaken by:	C.Harte
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

Apple Blossom is a full day care service located in Rathmines, Dublin 6 and is operated by Kids Inc Creches. The service cares for children aged between 6 months to six years from Monday to Friday between 7:45-6pm. The premises is a converted residential premises with four care rooms. The Wobbler room, a designated cot room and a kitchen is located on the basement level. The Toddler 1, Toddler 2 and Preschool room are on the first floor. A fully enclosed outdoor area is available to the children at the back of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a total of 15 staff including the person in charge. A staff member from head office is also included on the service roster and present on occasion at the premises. The registered provider does not work directly 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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 21 Equipment and Materials. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler room and Toddler 2 room.

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 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)(c) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required throughout the inspection. Documentation displayed at the entrance listed the management structure and staff on the premises were aware of their role and responsibility.

(b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files of seventeen adults including the person in charge, deputy person in charge, three relief staff, one head office support staff and a student were reviewed on the day of the inspection. The following was observed:

- (a) Twenty-eight written and validated references were available from previous employers.
- (b) Six written and validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seventeen adults. This demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures from five countries were available for sixteen adults who resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Evidence was available to show that sixteen staff members who work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed 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 that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Nine staff were caring for thirty-four children when the inspector arrived in the service. The person in charge was available in a supernumerary position and was available to cover in rooms as needed.
- (2) Ratios were maintained on the day of inspection. The following was observed:
- In the Wobbler room three staff were caring for 8 children aged 1 year – 1 year 8 months.
 - In the toddler 1 room two staff were caring for five children aged 1 year 8 months – 2 years 5 months.
 - In the Toddler 2 room two staff were caring for ten children aged 2-3 years.
 - In the Preschool room two staff were caring for eleven children aged between 3-5 years.

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:
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
 - (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1) (h) A roll book was available to record the daily attendance of the children.
- (i) The service had a staff roster which detailed the working hours of all staff and was reflective of those present on the day.
 - (k) A review of a sample of 10 records demonstrated that the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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 care rooms contained a range of resources for variety of play experiences. For example:

- The Wobbler room contained foam blocks for climbing supporting gross motor movement and threading toys for fine motor movements.
- The Toddler 2 room resources included a selection of dress up supporting imaginative play and sand providing for sensory experiences.

The outdoor area was fully enclosed and included a fenced space for messy play using natural materials. Children also had access to ride on toys, a slide and spring rocking toys.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In Toddler 2 room the table and chairs observed in the care room were not an appropriate size for the children attending. At 11:31am a child was observed sitting at a table at shoulder height. This prevents children engaging in activities and mealtimes comfortably.

2. Materials and resources in the care rooms were not accessible to children discouraging them to choose independently. The following was observed:
 - In the Wobbler room a shelving unit in the centre of the room with a raised ledge stored boxes filled with heavy resources which were difficult for the children to lift and remove from the unit.
 - In the Wobbler room the shelving unit positioned near the mirror stored resources that were not suitably sized for the box which could not be pulled out from the shelf.
 - In the Toddler 2 room a large box entirely filled with building blocks was positioned on the third shelf of a storage unit. A staff member was observed struggling to adjust and reposition the box on the shelf due to its position, size, and weight.
 - In the Toddler 2 room stencils and chalk boards did not have any supporting resources to allow the children to use them as intended.
3. Library books in toddler 2 room were observed torn and damaged.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. **Corrective action:** The situation was immediately rectified with a lower table and chairs of an appropriate size. Across all rooms different sized tables and chairs are used depending on the children's ages.

Preventive action: Team members from each room with the support of management must continue to observe sitting arrangements are of an appropriate size for the children attending. This must be done every time a child progress to a new group.
2. **Corrective action:** Two shelving units in two care rooms had resources placed in an inappropriate manner making them difficult for the children to access. Resources mentioned in the report were reviewed. In the Wobbler room heavy resources were removed and replaced with soft blocks, soft balls and sensory musical toys not stored in a box. The second unit in the Wobbler room was reviewed and now has suitably sized resources for the shelf. A new shelf was introduced in the Toddler 2 room and the building blocks were distributed between two boxes allowing easy access for children. Supporting resources are now in the Toddler 2 room for use with stencils, blackboards and paper. Prewriting sets have been arranged on top of a low unit.

Preventive action: Team members must continue to observe layout of resources in each interest area. Resource must be well organised and easily accessible as per service policy. The equipment must be

suitable, safe and age appropriate, while providing exciting new challenges and experiences for the developmental needs of our children.

- Corrective action:** The library in Toddler 2 room was reviewed, torn and damaged books were removed. New books have been introduced.

Preventive action: Team members from each room must continue to ensure books are in good condition and replaced when necessary. Children should be regularly reminded how to treat the books with respect.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under Regulation 21 have been addressed.

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 to the service was secure. A video doorbell was in use allowing staff in the care rooms to see and talk to visitors at the door before entry. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the service and prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents within care rooms were observed to be safely stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Soothers were observed stored in individually labelled boxes.
- Staff were observed encouraging preschool children to wash their hands after toileting.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in rooms where children aged over 1 year old were sleeping.

- A log was maintained of the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.
- The sleep rooms remained quite supporting rest for the children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The adult sink in basement sanitary area had a water temperature of 46.3 °C at 10:30am. This posed a potential risk of injury.
2. A rug in the Wobbler room was turned up at the edges posing a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing procedure was not in line with best practice or the services policy and procedure which posed a risk of infection control. For example:
 - A staff member did not wash their hands after changing a nappy.
 - Gloves worn for nappy changing remained on while cream was applied, and the child was redressed.
 - Gloves worn for nappy changing remained on while a child was redressed, and the changing mat was disinfected.
 - A staff member was observed using a foot pedal operated bin by hand.
 - A staff member was observed washing their hands in a sink labelled for potty cleaning.
4. The children's sink in the sanitary area on the basement level used by the Wobbler room and children when playing in the outdoor area did not have an adequate water supply. A trickle of water came out of the tap when turned on. An adequate flow of warm water is required for effective handwashing to reduce the spread of infection.
5. Three cots observed with stained sheets were used during sleep time. This is not in line with the services sleep room check list that includes the use of clean linen or the policy on sleep that states linen is laundered each week or more often as necessary.
6. On the day of inspection there was no available cleaning record of the current week for the Wobbler room. Staff advised the inspector that the record is created on a Friday and completed for the week. Records required to maintain service policy should be kept up to date and completed in a timely manner.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were unaware that a child in their care had an allergy this posed a risk that the child may not receive appropriate care in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged that the person in charge was aware of the allergy and steps to take in the event of a reaction.

Safe Sleep:

- Two cots were observed with toys while children were sleeping. This posed a choking hazard and is not in line with the services policy that states toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the cot when the child is sleeping.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Corrective action:** The maintenance manager reviewed the current setting on the tank.

Preventive action: The Health and Safety Officer will complete regular checks in the centre to identify any hazard and remove risks to children, staff, and visitors.
- Corrective action:** The rug has been removed and replaced.

Preventive action: The Health and Safety Officer will complete regular checks in the centre to identify any hazard and remove risks to children, staff, and visitors.

Infection Control:

- Corrective action:** Staff have been retrained in the correct nappy changing procedure in line with service policy.

Preventive action: Frequent checks will be completed by management to ensure policy is being followed. Staff will be retrained regularly on the nappy changing procedure.
- Corrective action:** The sink has been repaired and now has an adequate water supply.

Preventive action: The Health and Safety Officer will continue to complete regular checks in the centre to identify any concerns and report them to manager. The manager will then contact the maintenance manager to fix any issues arising.
- Corrective action:** This was addressed immediately. Staff were reminded of correct procedure and retrained on the services infection control policy.

Preventive action: Management will continue to observe hygiene and infection control practices. Staff will be regularly retrained on the infection control policy.

6. **Corrective action:** This was addressed immediately with staff. All staff members were retrained on the importance of completing paperwork and keeping it up to date in line with service policy.
- Preventive action:** Management will continue to observe if paperwork is completed. Staff will regularly be retrained on cleanliness and hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

7. **Corrective action:** Staff received further training on service policy for medication administration and the allergy list for the centre. Staff were reminded who the FAR trained staff are in the centre.
- Preventive action:** Management will continue to do spot checks on staff knowledge regarding emergency medications for staff and children in the centre.

Safe Sleep:

8. **Corrective action:** All staff were retrained on procedure and policy relating to safe sleep.
- Preventive action:** Management will continue to observe that safe sleep policy is adhered to. Staff will be regularly retrained on the safe sleep policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.
- Staff sign off on policy.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff sign off on policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff sign off on policy.

Summary Comment

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

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) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored safely out of reach of children but accessible to staff if required.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a staff member trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) was always available to the children. A review of available rosters demonstrated that a FAR person was not available 7:45am-9:00am Tuesday 6th to Friday 9th of February inclusive.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Additional staff have been FAR trained.

Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure that a staff member trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) is always available to the children for the duration of the opening hours of the centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Copy of staff roster.
- Copy of FAR certificates.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 has 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)(a) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service. The record showed that fire drills are completely monthly with the last fire drill taking place on the 18th January 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was reviewed. The record showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced 21st June 2023 while the smoke alarm was last serviced on 18th January 2024.
- (4) Notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency was displayed in the care rooms.