

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY166
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Name of Service:	Mulberry Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Bride Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H62 C437
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Name of Registered Provider:	Derek Leahy
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	78	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2 nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar Co Mayo
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin and F Kelly.
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

This service opened in Sept 2014. This service operates a full day care Early Years Service for children aged from 1 year to 12 years. This service is located in the urban town of Loughrea in Co. Galway. This service has 6 playrooms, a designated sleep room and a kitchen area. There is a large well resourced outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

A service for school aged children is also provided. The service operates from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 21 adults employed in the service which includes the manager and chef. It also included the registered provider who does not work in the service on a daily basis but was available to help facilitate the inspection on the day.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations ,9,11, 19 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23.

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 inspectors wish 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*

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the manager was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there was 21 members of staff employed in the service. There was 1 student on work placement on the day of inspection.

These files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) There were 36 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer for the adults working in the service.

(b) There were 5 written and appropriately validated reference available from a source other than the previous last employer for an adult working in the service.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting for staff members every three years.

(d) Police Vetting disclosure was available for the 3 adults working in the service as they had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.

- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or equivalent on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 78 pre-school children, attending the service in the morning and 62 children attending the service in the afternoon.

(2) At 10.30 am on the day of inspection, the following care rooms was in operation.

- Baby room there was 1 adult caring for 3 babies.
- Wobbler room there were 3 adults caring for 13 children aged between 1 year and 2 years of age.
- The lodge playroom there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement caring for 14 children aged between 2 years of age and 3 years of age.
- The Nest playroom there was 1 adult caring for 8 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.
- The Cabin 1 playroom there were 3 adults and caring for 20 children aged over 2 years 8 months of age
- The Cabin 2 playroom there were 3 adults caring for 20 children aged over 2 years 8 months.

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

Basic needs

- Nutritious healthy meals were served at regular times with flexibility given for children who were sleeping.
- The service introduced a new menu with a focus on more varied nutritious meals. Children were observed eating rice cakes and chopped fruit for morning snack and vegetable curry consisting of carrots, peas and chick peas and rice for dinner.
- Care and attention is taken during meal times to eat at the child's pace and staff encouraged and supported children to feed themselves independently according to their age and stage of development.
- The atmosphere during meal times was relaxed and allowed for good social interaction between the children and staff members.
- Children sat at table and chairs or high chairs which were appropriate for their height and or stage of development.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- Staff responded to each child's individual needs and children's nappies were changed in a timely manner,
- The children could move about freely in their playrooms and all the children had the opportunity to play outdoors.
- The care rooms had designated relaxation areas which allowed the children a soft space to rest.
- Children nap and sleep times were supported according to each child's individual needs.

Supporting relationships

- Adults were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities.
- Adults were observed to be caring and supportive to children and their individual needs.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times and through a bespoke childcare application.
- The service had a designated childcare application with interactive communication with parents and guardians. There was section with photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities. Staff observations, a child's milestones and individual learning stories were captured. The childcare application showed details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child's likes, needs and preferences and general observations and comments.

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:

- An electronic operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, pedal operated bins. Child friendly handwashing posters were located above the wash hand basins as prompts to promote good handwashing practices.

- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, wiping their noses, toileting and before mealtime

Safe Sleep:

- Low level beds were available for children over two years of age to rest and sleep.
- Classroom 1 was converted after lunch for the provision of sleep and rest. The room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius in the sleep room. A temperature checking device was available for staff to measure and monitor the room temperatures.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Multiple children's soothers were not stored in individual soother containers. The soothers were hanging on a wall touching off each other. This posed an infection control risk to the children.

Safe Sleep:

2. Evidence of the physical sleep checks carried out on the children in the wobbler room while they were sleeping was not consistently recorded. The childcare app in use by the service to record the physical checks was not in operation during this sleep time . This practice is in variance with the service's policy on safe sleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Infection Control:

1.Soothers are store in individual labelled containers, this practiced is reviewed by management on a regular basis.

Safe Sleep:

2. Physical sleep checks will be recorded on a backup paper record ,in the event of the childcare software application not working.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 5/12/2024, the registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the individual containers and a copy of the sleep check record to the early year's inspectorate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Summary Comment

The evidence and the actions taken were reviewed by the early years inspectorate and the regulatory requirement has been achieved.