

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY234
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Name of Service:	Socrates Learning Ltd t/a Spraioi Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Bealach Na Gaoithe, Galway Road, Tuam, Co. Galway.
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Eircode:	H54 CD51
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Name of Registered Provider:	Therese Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	41
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan 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 privately owned crèche was opened under the present management in 2015. This service is in a residential area, in the town of Tuam, Co Galway. There are 6 playrooms which include The Owls, The Chicks, The Monkeys, The Bumble Bees, The Tigers and The Butterflies. Rest areas are provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate children to rest or relax during the day. The service also has a designated sleep room with a total of 7 cots for children less than 2 years of age to sleep. Additionally, there are stackable beds and mats for children over 2 years of age. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals for children are prepared and heated. The meals are cooked in another premises owned by the registered provider. There is a secured outdoor play area located at the rear of the service for children to play. The service offers a full day care programme from 8 am to 6 pm, from Monday to Friday, which caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years of age. The service also offers a part time and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) preschool care programme/ sessional care programme.

Staffing

The service had a manager who is the person in charge and is on the premises daily. The registered provider does not work on the premises with the children daily. There is a total of 10 adults currently working in the premises which includes the area manager and registered provider.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,16, 19, 24, 27 and 32. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times when the pre-school children were present.
- (c) Staff rosters, policies and signage evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

All 13 adult files were reviewed including the registered provider and an area manager.

- (2)(a)&(b) Twenty-six of the validated references on file in respect of 13 adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 13 adults.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that 8 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years required police vetting. The police vetting for the 8 adults were available for inspection.
- (4) Twelve adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of Level 5, in Early Childhood and Education.

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) Documentary evidence indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained. On the morning of the inspection, there were 45 pre-school children present in the service and in the afternoon, there were 41 pre-school children present with 10 adults directly caring for and supervising these pre-school children.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k) A sample of 6 accident and Incidents records were reviewed. Out of the six records reviewed 4 were not signed by a parent or guardian which was invariance with what was stated in the service policy. There were no risk assessments carried out as a result of these accidents or incidents.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A reminder was sent to parents regarding signing accident and Incident forms. Any parent that does not sign the form online, the accident and incident form will be printed and placed in the child's file. If a parent has not signed the form, they are contacted and reminded to do so.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the notice and policy sent to parents.

Summary Comment

The documentation and statement by the registered provider have been reviewed and has been deemed to have met the requirements of this part of the regulations.

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

19(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and special dietary needs were reflected in the 3-week menu plan. The children ate their snacks provided by their parents and guardians. Perishable items were stored in the fridge prior to snack time. The morning snack consisted of sandwiches, fruit, crackers and cheese and juice or water.
- The hot meal of the day was Mexican chicken or a meat free pasta bake with milk or water.
- Crockery and plates were offered and used during children's snack and meal times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Children were given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack and meals without being rushed. Adults sat with the children during snack and mealtimes and engaged with the children.
- Children's own bottles were available and accessible on a drinks table to allow children to self-serve when thirsty in each playroom. Extra drinking water was available if required.
- The adults supervised children's hand washing before and after snack time, nappy changing, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after outdoors and messy play.
- The children were encouraged by the adults and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their level of independence.
- The children who were toilet trained, toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- The children's nappies were changed in a timely manner by adults and they were observed to engage with children in a positive manner throughout the nappy changing process. The correct nappy changing procedure was observed on the day of inspection.
- The playrooms were laid out with visual cues and displays to support each child's individual needs. This assisted children to make smooth transitions from one activity to the next.

- There was a quiet rest area with soft seating, in the playrooms to accommodate children's rest or to opt out of an activity.
- The children were engaged in a variety of activities which were both children and adult led. They were observed in circle time, sensory play, table top activities, artwork and one to one work with the support of the adults working with them.
- All the children played outside during the day of inspection and were suitably dressed when playing in the outdoor environment.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- A key worker system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key worker was also to liaise with parents or guardians.
- The service verbally provided parents and guardians with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests, preferences, and play activities engaged in. This information was shared at collection times, via text messages, by phone calls, a childcare application and by email.
- Adults used a variety of age-appropriate materials, visual aids, songs, and rhymes to assist children in their learning and development. These also help children in their various transitions from one activity to the next.
- Adults were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. Adults were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low soft tone of voice, listened to them, and responded to their queries throughout the day.
- Adults interacted in a positive way with the children e.g., they sat at children's level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and were familiar with each child's needs.
- Adults were observed to have worked as a team planning and organising the day, communicating with each other and assisting each other as required.
- The service was observed to be respectful of inclusion and diversity within the setting. Children's dietary requirements, culture, food and nationality were celebrated.
- The theme was Valentine's Day and spring and children were observed making valentines cards.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The multimedia application was reviewed that the service had used to sign in and out preschool children. All children were recorded and accounted for in the service.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b),(c) The service has a complaints policy outlining the process and procedure for investigating a complaint. The manager demonstrated a good knowledge of the service policy and the implementation of the complaints procedure and how the service deals with complaints.

(b) The manager demonstrated a good knowledge of the manner through which a complaint is dealt with.

(c) The manager outlined the manner in which a complaint is kept up to date in relation to complaint.

(4) The service policy detailed that a record is maintained for two years from the date on which the complaint was made.