

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KE006			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Busy Beavers			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Abbeylands, Mill Road, Castledermot, Co. Kildare			
<b>Eircode:</b>	R14 XN53			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sharon O'Neill			
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	07/10/2024			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	n/a
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Mulhern			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector			
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>				
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).				
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.			

## Description of service

Busy Beavers is registered to provide part-time and sessional education and care to children aged 2-6 years between 8:30am and 4:30pm. The service operates from a large room in a purpose-built premises in Castledermot Co. Kildare. An outdoor play area is located to the front. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. Learning is facilitated through a child led, play-based approach integrated with Montessori methods.

## Staffing

There are eight adults employed to work in the service including the registered provider. Four adults were allocated to work directly with the children on the day of 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 areas of governance/ health, welfare and development of child / safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1), (2) & (4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1), (2) & (8)(a) - Staffing levels

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Regulation 15(1) – Record of a Pre-school child

Regulations 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 27 – Supervision

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part II - Registration and Register

### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

*(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) & (3) The service was registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children. Twenty-four children were present on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider had not notified the Agency of the changes as required.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The additional children returned to the afternoon session the next day. The service had expected absences on the day due to absences the previous week. The service is in the process of applying for a change of circumstance to 24 children. The service will no longer permit children to move between the two sessions.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documents submitted.

### Summary Comment

(1) & (3) The actions submitted have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.

### 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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.
- (b) There was a person in charge and a named person who could deputise on the premises during the inspection.
- (c) There was a documented management structure in place including roles and responsibilities of staff. Staff and management were aware of the lines of authority and accountability.

(2) (a) & (b) It was evident that adequate consideration had been given to references for all staff members. References had been sourced from their past employers and from another source where they had only one or no previous employers. Records were available of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for 8 adults, 7 of which were dated within the last three years. 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) Not applicable as none of the staff members had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(4) All staff employed to work directly with children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. Four staff members were allocated to work directly with 24 children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was always maintained.

(8) (a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

### 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;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (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

A sample of 10 records for children were reviewed. The required information was available as outlined below.

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date when each child first attended the service.
- (c) A section was available for recording the date when the child ceases attending.
- (d) The name, address and telephone number of parents and information where parents can be contacted.
- (e) Names and contact details of other adults authorised to collect the child.
- (f) Medical information, allergies, dietary preferences, additional needs, and other information specific to the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child’s medical practitioner.
- (h) Immunisation details.
- (i) Signed parental consent for medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

## 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

The children's learning, development and well-being was supported by the staff and the environment. The children engaged in a sessional curriculum in the morning which included Montessori work and free play. The children moved freely between the indoor and outdoor areas and were supported to dress according to the weather, putting on their own boots and rain gear. The environments were laid out to support learning and play with equipment and materials visible and easily accessible to the children.

The children self-selected materials from designated shelves which included practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and cultural studies. Language was supported through reading books, conversations and discussions about the children's work and play. Children were observed engaging in painting activities and role-playing in the designated home corner. An area was provided beside the library for children to rest or take a break from activities. Outdoors, children had access to natural elements including mud, water and plants as well as equipment for climbing and ride-on toys.

Breakfast was provided by the service and the children brought lunches from home. A jug of drinking water and cups were always available within the room. The children used the toilet independently as they needed with staff providing reminders about handwashing and offering help when needed. Staff interacted warmly and respectfully with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting the children in their work and play.

### 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:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Equipment was appropriately maintained and items that could cause harm to children including kitchen items, cleaning products and medicines were secured out of their reach.

##### Infection Control:

Appropriate measures were taken to reduce the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment were clean and well maintained. Children washed their hands after outdoor play, after wiping their noses, after using the toilet and before eating. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal operated lidded bins; cleaning schedules were in place which included the regular laundering of soft materials. Staff demonstrated an understanding of the exclusion criteria for infectious diseases to help prevent their spread.

##### Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the necessary measures to safeguard children if medication was required, including obtaining parental consent and maintaining accurate records.

##### Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire. A designated fire assembly point was clearly marked in the outdoor area at the front of the premises. Staff demonstrated an understanding of fire safety measures to protect children, including the practice of regular fire drills.

##### Outing:

Staff showed an awareness of the measures needed to safeguard children during outings. They were familiar with the policy, which includes obtaining parental consent and conducting risk assessments beforehand. Records were available of risk assessments that had been done for previous outings.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, one staff member's vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The renewed vetting application was made in August 2024 but there was an issue with the address causing a delay. This disclosure has now been received.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Copy of Garda vetting record dated 16 October 2024.

## Summary Comment

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) A person trained in first aid for children was always available to the children.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was appropriately equipped, easily accessed, and safely stored in a conspicuous position in the preschool room.

(b) The first aid box was available for use within the premises. Staff reported a first aid box is taken on all outings.

### 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) Records were available of fire drills carried out in the service. The most recent drill recorded was dated 27 September 2024.

(b) Records were available detailing the maintenance of the smoke alarm system dated 10 October 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the preschool room.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was not available detailing the maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Two new fire extinguishers were purchased for the service in January 2024. A copy of the record has been obtained from the engineer. The equipment will be serviced as required and a record which will be kept on file.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Record of firefighting equipment supplied to service dated 5 January 2024.

### Summary Comment

(1)(b) The regulatory requirement has been met.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

### Compliance Information

The adults provided appropriate supervision of the children, primarily by keeping them in sight. Staff successfully ensured proper supervision while allowing the children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas.