

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE019
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Name of Service:	Choice Childcare
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Address of Service:	Aghards House, Thornhill, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 D6Y1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine O'Meara
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	9 April 2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and F. Maher
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	n/a
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Description of service

Choice Childcare provides full day and sessional childcare and education to pre-school children aged 2-6 years from 7.30am to 18.30 hours Monday to Friday. The service is registered to accommodate school aged children. Choice Childcare is located on the outskirts of Celbridge and operates from the first floor of a retail unit. Three pre-school rooms, one nappy changing area, an office, a kitchen, laundry facilities and a secure outdoor play area are located on the premises. Set down and parking facilities are available outside the premises.

Staffing

There are ten adults employed in the service including the cook. Twelve adults including two students were present on the day of the inspection. Of the twelve adults, eight were working directly with thirty-three pre-school children. The registered provider, area manager, manager and cook were present on the day of the 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 area of governance and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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, 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

(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 a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- Thirteen staff records were reviewed including the files for two workplace students.
- (2)
- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of ten adults and one written and verified past employer reference was available in respect of two adult employed in the service whose records were reviewed.
 - (b) Two written and verified references from a reputable source other than a past employer was available in respect of one adult and one written and verified reference from a reputable source was available for two adults whose records was reviewed.
 - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for eleven staff members and two workplace students.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was in place for two adults employed who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were completed prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) Seven adults working directly with the children held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher 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) There were thirty-three children attending the service being supervised directly by eight adults.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

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

There was a good variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available for the children to use and play with during the day. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment ensured the resources were freely available and easily accessible to the children at all times in the pre-school rooms. Child sized couches provided a comfortable quiet space for the children to rest, take a break or read a book during the day and low-level beds with appropriately stored bed linen were available for the children to have a period of sleep when attending on a part time and full day care basis.

Child sized tables and chairs were maintained in good condition and ensured the children could sit comfortably for tabletop activities and when eating their meals and snacks.

The outdoor play area had areas of interest to prompt the children’s imagination and there was equipment to encourage a variety of gross motor activities. A covered area ensured that the children could use the space during inclement weather.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the service provided the meals and snacks to the children attending on a full day care basis. A two-week menu was available and meals were freshly prepared by the cook on a daily basis. The hot meals provided were observed to be varied and nutritious and included a variety of roast meats, potatoes and vegetables, curry dishes with meat, vegetables and rice and various pasta dishes with meat and vegetables added. Snacks included beans on toast, eggs, cheese and ham toasties and crackers with cheese, ham and fresh fruit. Children’s food allergies were considered and catered for accordingly. Drinking water was freely available throughout the day in each pre-school room and milk was offered at mealtimes.

Parents provided the morning snack for their child attending the sessional services and the staff members ensured all food provided was nutritious and suitable. The staff members advised they included healthy eating as part of the curriculum and the children were encouraged to try foods that staff prepared for different tastes and textures. During conversations with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces.

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 two entrance doors to the service were electronically controlled by staff members to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the care rooms. The person in charge documented the inspectors' visit to the service in the visitor's book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members in the service completed daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments to promptly manage any risk identified. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

There was an infection control policy in place. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Nappy changing practices were consistent with the nappy change procedure for the service. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. The service had a system in place for the immediate disposal of soiled nappies and wipes where they were brought to the bin in the outdoor area. Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required safe practice when administering medication in the service. Medicine was safely stored. Written care plans were available for children requiring the administration of medication regularly and in an emergency situation.

Safe Sleep:

There was a rest area in each of the care rooms for any child who wished to take a break from activities or rest. Part of the ECCE 1 room was transitioned to accommodate children requiring sleep for a period of the day. Sufficient low-level beds were available for any child requiring sleep. Bed linen was stored in individual containers. The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance and practice. Ten-minute sleep check observations were

completed on all sleeping children and the staff documented the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care. The environmental temperature of the care room when used for sleep was maintained between 16°- 20° Celsius as there were two portable air conditioning units to control the environmental room temperature.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service conducts outings. An outings policy is available to guide practice.

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) Persons were trained in in First Aid Response (FAR) for children and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)

(a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the main corridor and each room has a small first aid kit.

(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children was available to the children attending 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 firefighting 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) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service; the last recorded fire drill was on the 28 March 2024
 - (b) A maintenance record was kept of the firefighting and smoke alarm system in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in September 2023 and the smoke alarm system was serviced in 8 March 2024.
 - (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.