

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE019				
Name of Service:	Choice Childcare				
Address of Service:	Aghards House, Thornhill, Celbridge, Co. Kildare				
Eircode:	W23 D6Y1				
Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine O'Meara				
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	24/07/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>14</td> <td>PM</td> <td>14</td> </tr> </table>	AM	14	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W</p>				
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and H. Bourke				
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

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. Due to the time of year the ECCE room 1 was only operational.

Staffing

There are ten adults employed in the service including the cook. The registered provider while not present is available to work directly with the children should the need arise.

Nine adults were present on the day of the inspection and three adults working directly with the fourteen pre-school children. The 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, health, welfare and development of child 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, area manager, 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.

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

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

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.

Ten staff records were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of seven adults 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 three adults whose records were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for ten staff members.
- (d) Police vetting was available for two adults 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) Nine 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.
- (7) The registered provider and area manager had implemented a system of regular team meetings every 4-6 weeks and has recently commenced one to one supervision meetings with the staff.

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) There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that a copy of the regulations was available in the service and was open to inspection on the premises when requested by an authorised person.

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

Basic needs of children:

The service promoted a healthy eating policy. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. The children's drinks were within their reach throughout the day should they feel thirsty.

Toileting and nappy changing were completed regularly and promptly when required. It was handled in a sensitive and positive manner.

The individual sleep needs of the children were met. All children requiring sleep, slept at a designated time during the day and were provided with as much time as they needed to sleep.

The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours. Children were spoken to in a kind and respectful manner. Their first names were used, appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones were observed being used during all interactions.

Supporting relationships around children:

Staff members were observed being respectful, gentle and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings.

Staff members were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and engaging them in conversation which ensured that the experience was relaxed and sociable.

The staff members were observed supporting the children to engage positively with one another; the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. In the outdoor area the children were observed being shown how to play ‘what’s the time mr wolf’ and ‘duck duck goose’ by the staff prior to starting the games. The children involved really enjoyed the games and their laughter and joy encouraged the remaining children to join in.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Other information was shared with parents via a closed electronic communication system.

Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary and email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact.

The person in charge has implemented a schedule of regular team meetings.

Physical and material environment:

Defined areas of interest were observed in the ECCE 1 room. These included a library area, a home corner, area with bricks, connecting toys, puzzles and jigsaws, a construction area, small world toys and materials, sensorial materials which included sand, water and playdough.

The materials were available on low level shelving which were accessible to the children. Low level chairs and tables were available to the children for meals and tabletop activities.

The outdoor area was located in a secure area at the rear of the premises. There ground surface was covered in artificial grass carpet and two covered areas ensured that the children could play outdoors during inclement weather conditions.

Equipment included a mud kitchen with plenty of real-life associative equipment to extend play, a wooden playhouse with soft cushions, a large sand play area which was covered when not in use and tractors, trucks, wheelbarrows, scooters, tyres and a climbing and crawling area.

Programme of activities:

On the day of the inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. The staff members supported the children with their activities and did not interfere in the play. The routine was child led and responsive to the children’s interests.

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. Three low level beds and two mattresses 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^o-20^o 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 does not conduct outings. An outings policy is available.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
 - (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a), (b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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 29th of June 2023.
 - (b) A maintenance record was kept of the firefighting and smoke alarm system in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in September 2022 and the smoke alarm system was serviced on the 15th of June 2023.
 - (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2023. The insurance provided cover for 60 children.