

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE027				
Name of Service:	Small Beginnings				
Address of Service:	Capdoo, Clane, Co. Kildare				
Eircode:	W91 HC91				
Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Lyons				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	1 February 2023				
Date of Regulatory Compliance Meeting	14 February 2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>15</td> <td>PM</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> </table>	AM	15	PM	n/a
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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
Titles:	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

Small Beginnings was established in 2003 and provides sessional care and education to preschool children aged between two and six years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08.45- 11.45 am and 12:15 – 15:15 hours.

The service is located in premises attached to the registered providers property in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of Clane. The service consists of two large open plan rooms with a secured outdoor play area at the rear of the service.

Parking and set down facilities are available.

Staffing

There were four adults including the registered provider present on the day of inspection. Three were working directly with the children. The registered provider arrived after the inspection had commenced and remained for the duration.

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, safety, premises and facilities. The inspections 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.

Additional Information

1. A regulatory compliance meeting was conducted by the Inspection and Registration Manager and the Early Years Inspector with the Registered Provider and manager on 14 February 2023.

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

The records for three staff members were reviewed.

- (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.
- (2)
 - (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of one staff member and one written and verified past employer references were available in respect of two staff members.
 - (b) One written and verified reference from a reputable source other than a past employer, was available in respect of two staff members.
 - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for three staff members recently employed by the service.

(d) International police vetting was available for one staff member who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Three adults recently employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) There were fifteen children attending the service being supervised directly by four adults.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the morning.

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 five records were assessed.

- (1)
- (a) All records sampled contained the name and date of birth of the child.
 - (c) All records sampled contained the date on which the child ceased to attend the service.
 - (d) All records sampled contained the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number.
 - (e) All records sampled contained completed authorisation for the collection of the child.
 - (h) All records sampled contained the record of immunisations received by the child.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) – (i) A sample of five records were assessed and five were found to be non-compliant as evidenced by the following:
- (b) There was no start date recorded on five child records reviewed.
 - (f) Details were not recorded on one record reviewed of any illness, disability, allergy or any relevant information pertaining to the child.

- (g) The name and details of a child's GP was not recorded on one record reviewed.
- (i) Written parental consent for emergency treatment was not recorded on one record reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All files were checked, and the information updated. Going forward a new template for registration and all information will be used.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The written response submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 15. This area will be assessed at the next inspection.

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; children's snacks were observed to be nutritious and healthy.

The children were encouraged to be independent, and they were supported by the staff members to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings, assistance was given when needed.

The staff members ensured that each child was appropriately clothed for outdoors activities.

The children were observed enjoying freedom of movement indoors and outdoors on the day of the inspection.

A comfortable rest area was available in the care room if they wanted to take a break, rest and sit quietly.

The staff members working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours.

Supporting relationships around children:

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

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

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Parents are now provided with electronic updates about their child's day 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.

Physical and material environment:

Defined areas of interest were observed; these included a library area, a home corner, dress up clothes and equipment, area with bricks, blocks, puzzles and jigsaws, fine motor materials including peg boards and clips, a construction area, small world toys including cars, trucks, small animals and musical toys and Montessori equipment.

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

A large outdoor area at the rear of the premises was available to the preschool children for outdoor play. There was a grassed area and another area with soft impact surface. There was adequate space for the children to run freely and engage in playground games. The children were observed enjoying outdoor play on the day of the inspection.

Programme of activities:

Play is the primary mode of learning for the children. A curriculum which encompassed short, medium and long term themes and planning was available to support children's learning and development. It is flexible and can adapt to any child's emergent interests as they arise. The staff members evidenced planning for each child based on their individual observations which captured their emergent interests.

Learning is explored through the medium of areas of interest developed to reflect the interests, free play, storytelling, arts and crafts and singing. The children were learning about recycling and St Brigid, and this was reflected in the wall displays and singing.

On the day of the inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choices in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. Three tables supported by individual staff members with prepared activities were available to the children if they wished to participate.

Non-Compliance Information

Physical and material environment:

1. There were no sensorial materials available to the children in the service. It is acknowledged that two shallow containers with a small amount of water were provided however this limited the play experience for the children.
2. The colouring pencils required to be sharpened and there was two pieces of paper available in the mark making area; there were eight small, pieces of chalk at the blackboard all of which limited the experience for the children.

- The noise level was raised for a long period in the preschool room which was not a conducive environment for learning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- New tuff trays will be provided for indoor and outdoor play.
- The pencils will be sharpened more regularly. More paper will be available to the children.
- Children will be provided with outdoor play in smaller groups throughout the morning.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs points 1, 2.

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 19. This area will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 entrance to the service was secured with a thumb turn lock and was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school rooms. The person in charge documented the inspectors' visit to the service in the visitor's book on arrival.

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.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

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.

Written cleaning schedules were displayed and maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

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 the safe practice when administering medication in the service.

Safe Sleep:

There was a comfortable rest area available for any child who wished to take a break from activities for a while or read quietly.

Fire Safety:

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

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Children were observed to have whole grapes in their lunch boxes which created a potential risk of choking. It is acknowledged that the staff members halved them when it was brought to their attention.
2. A pre-school child was observed eating a biscuit while walking around the room unsupervised; this posed a potential choking risk to the child.
3. The cupboard door on the left-hand side under the sink in the care room was not secured and the contents of the cupboard were accessible to a preschool child.
4. The electric cable of the air purifier was observed to be on the floor, not secured and was accessible to the children.
5. The protective cover on the foot pedal of the bin in the sanitary area was missing leaving a metal spike exposed. This posed a potential risk of injury to a child if they fell against it.

6. The finger protection door safety plastic cover in the children's sanitary accommodation was not fully secured and posed a risk of entrapment injury to a child.
7. The smoke alarm was beeping regularly and required to be reviewed as it may not be able to effectively function as a smoke detector.

Infection Control:

8. There were no dispensers available for the hygienic dispensing of the paper towels or toilet roll in the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A video has been sent to the parents for the two sessions.
2. Children have been advised not to walk around when eating food.
3. The catch on the cupboard has been replaced.
4. The electric cable has been secured.
5. The foot pedal operated bins will be replaced.
6. The protective cover in the toilet area has been repaired.
7. The smoke alarm battery has been replaced.

Infection Control:

8. Dispensers are being sought.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs points 1, 3, 4, 5, 7.

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23. This area will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 first aid for children and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) Signage for first aid was required as the first aid box was not observed to be in a conspicuous position in the premises.
- (b) There were no alcohol-free antiseptic wipes available in the first aid box. It was observed that there were six alcohol wipes in the first aid box.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) Signage has been attached to the wall.
- (b) Antiseptic wipes have been added.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25. This area will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 17 January 2023.
 - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 29 August 2022.
 - (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) There was no record available for the maintenance of the fire/smoke alarm system in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (b) Smoke alarms are being replaced in July.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The written response submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is not met for regulation 26 as no corrective action was provided.

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 22 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

(d)
Cleaning schedules were in place to evidence cleaning completed. The environment was observed to be maintained in a clean condition. The service has a system in place to manage any maintenance required.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The walls and wooden skirting boards in the sanitary area were observed to be stained and chipped in sanitary area.
 2. Dust and cobwebs observed around the pipework under the sinks in the sanitary area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. No response provided.
2. The cobwebs have been removed and regular dusting will be completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph point 2

Summary Comment

The written response and photograph submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is not met for regulation 29 as there was no corrective action provided for point 1.