

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE130
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare Sallins
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Address of Service:	Millbank, Sallins, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 DY99
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	68
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & E. Mulhern
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

Cocoon Childcare Naas is one of 15 childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:15 to 18:30, Monday to Friday. Sessional care is provided from 09:00 to 12:00.

The service is located in a purpose-built single storey premises in a residential area of Sallins, Co. Kildare.

There are six care rooms in the service. The Wobbler Junior and Wobbler Senior rooms cater for children aged 1 year. The Toddler 1 room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Toddler 2 room caters for children aged 2 years. The Preschool 1 room caters for children aged 2 to 4 years, and the Preschool 2 room caters for children aged 3 to 5 years. There are two dedicated cot rooms for younger children. A fully enclosed outdoor play area wraps around the building and can be accessed directly from each care room.

Staffing

The service currently employs 21 staff members including the service manager and a chef.

There were 20 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. This included the operations manager and one adult from another centre operated by the registered provider who arrived following the inspector's arrival. The registered provider does not work directly in the service but arrived in the afternoon and was present for the closing meeting.

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/ records/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) – Management and recruitment,
11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
15 (1) – Record of a pre-school child,
19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
25 – First aid,
26 (1),(4) – Fire safety measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations;

19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Junior and Wobbler Senior rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 (1) – Record of a pre-school child.

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, 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)(b)
The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises during the inspection.

(2)

The inspection focused on the recruitment records for six adults employed since the last inspection on 8th July 2024. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of these six adults and four other adults who were present during the inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Of the 12 validated, written references that were required, 10 were available from a past employer and 2 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 10 adults. 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 for one adult. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was required for six staff members and was available for the six staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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.

(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 directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 74 children attending the service being supervised by 16 adults on the day of inspection.

(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

(1)
A sample of 12 records were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Meals were provided at regular intervals and drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day. Dinner was served at 11:25. All children were given bibs for dinnertime. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance with their meals.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after dinner. Staff were observed changing children's clothing which had become wet following dinner. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. There was a designated nap time for children attending the Junior and Senior Wobbler rooms, however inspectors observed staff placing children down for a nap when they displayed signs of tiredness. Suitable cots were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff soothing the children as needed.

The service had a key person system in place. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

Children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather. Staff were observed applying suncream to children before they used the outdoor area.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection times and by using a daily handover sheet detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes and. Parents were observed in the care rooms during drop off and collection times.

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 door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Children's nappies were changed in line with the service's nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.
- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children and was stored separately when not in use. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

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

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The centre manager had submitted the Garda vetting application form in advance of the renewal date. However, the staff member encountered issues with the online application and had requested an alternative link to allow them to complete the renewal process successfully, which resulted in the delay. The vetting has since been returned and is on file.

The centre management team monitor the staff Garda vetting expiry dates using a spreadsheet that is updated monthly – this usually allows them to plan and complete the renewals in a timely manner. Going forward, the management team will request that staff complete the process a couple of months in advance to allow for any technical delays.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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 was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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)

A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on the 4th April 2025.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that the fire fighting equipment had been serviced in August 2024 and that maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on the 19th February 2024.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.