

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:	08/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	49
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan
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 Sallins is one of several services operated by the registered provider in Kildare, Dublin and Wicklow. The service offers full day care, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 0-6 years old. Opening hours are from 07:15am-18:30pm, Monday-Friday. The service operates from a purpose-built premises located in a private residential housing development on the outskirts of Sallins Co. Kildare. Six pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, staff room and an office are provided. Play areas wrap around the building to the rear and each side.

Staffing

There were nineteen adults present in the service on the day of the inspection, this included two staff assigned for school age care, eleven staff working directly with pre-school children, one staff member providing relief for breaks and the person in charge and deputy person in charge were supernumerary and available to provide support to the rooms as necessary throughout the day. The operations manager and cook were also present, and the registered provider arrived to the service at 11:30 am and remained for the duration 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, operations 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.
- The records of eight staff members, employed since the last inspection, were reviewed.
- (2)(a),(b)
- Sixteen written and verified references from a past employer were available in respect of four staff members whose records were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all employed staff members.
- The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.
- (d) Police vetting was in place for eight adults employed who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- Seven recently employed 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. A qualification was not required for one adult recently employed.

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 forty-nine children attending the service being supervised directly by eleven 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 throughout the inspection, this was confirmed on review of the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent.

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following required:

(h)

Details of children's attendance, including their arrival and departure times at the service in real time, were readily available.

(i)

A staff roster was available detailing the start and finish times for all staff members.

(j)

A sample of twenty records documenting medication given to children was reviewed. Each record included all appropriate and relevant details.

(k)
Records detailing accidents, injuries, and incidents involving children were readily available. A sample of fifteen records were reviewed, each record contained the appropriate and relevant details.

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs of children

A chef was employed and freshly prepared and served each meal/snack daily. The menu plan was displayed in the corridor of the service, this was varied and nutritionally adequate. The hot meal served was spaghetti bolognese. Water was freely available and accessible in the pre-school rooms to the children throughout the day and milk was offered at all mealtimes. Children's clothes were protected with bibs in the younger care rooms during mealtimes. The children were afforded plenty of time to eat their meals, were not rushed the staff members sat with the children and assisted when required, particularly in the younger care rooms. During conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any foods provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces.

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within their rooms and the babies were observed crawling and exploring their environment. Aprons were available to the children for water and messy play activities and spare clothing was available should it be required.

All children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play morning and afternoon, sunscreen and hats were applied before going outside due to the sunny weather.

Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis and more frequently if required.

Rest areas were available in all rooms should a child decide to rest, read a book or take a break from activities if tired during the day.

Two sleep rooms, with eighteen standard cots for children aged less than two years, were available to facilitate needs led sleep. Low level sleep beds with appropriate bed linen were available for children over two years of age requiring sleep at a designated time while attending the full day care or part-time services.

Children's behaviour was managed positively with an emphasis on praise and encouragement.

Supporting relationships around children

The children were observed to be content, happy and relaxed as they moved about their pre-school rooms.

All staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during all interactions. Babies settling in the junior Wobbler room were held, comforted and soothed as they got used to their new environment and parents were encouraged to stay for a period of time during the settling in phase.

Communication with parents was at the drop off and collection times and a detailed written record of the younger children's day was given to parents each evening. Meetings can be arranged with parents and staff/management, other forms of communication with parents is by phone and email.

Physical and material environment

The pre-school room environments provided the children with interesting spaces to play, learn and develop. They were well presented and well-resourced to encourage each child to initiate self-directed activities.

The low-level shelving units in the pre-school rooms ensured that the materials and equipment were freely available to children, enabling free choice of the equipment to support child led play. There were defined areas of interest which included home corners, construction, library and rest spaces, mark making with arts and crafts resources, puzzles, jigsaws, shape and colour sorter toys, stacking toys, building bricks and blocks, sensorial trays /materials and small world. Climbing equipment to support gross motor development and skills was available in the younger rooms along with ride on and push/pull equipment, soft and shiny materials added to the younger children's curiosity and sensory experiences.

The children's individual artwork was on display in various rooms.

The outdoor area had an artificial grass surface and was fully enclosed with a high-level metal fence/walls and wooden gates either side. Equipment included sand and water play, a variety of ride on and push/pull toys, balls and large shapes that could be made into various items for imaginary play. Balance beams, a large double sided chalk board with chalk, a small slide, small playhouse, teepee and a geodesic climbing frame added to the fun and play activities for the children. A log cabin was also constructively planned with interest areas and play equipment for another play area for the children to use. There was an extendable canopy outside the junior Wobbler room and

sunshade sails in two other areas of the garden which enabled the children to access the outdoor area if the weather was inclement and provided shade during very sunny/hot weather.

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 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. Both side gates were secured with high level bolt mechanisms that were out of reach of the children. 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 and medicines. The management and staff members in the service completed daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments before children arrived or used the outdoor play area to promptly manage any risk identified.

Infection Control:

Nappy changing procedures were observed for four nappy changes; the procedure was consistent with the nappy change policy for the service. Disposable gloves, plastic aprons, nappy sacks and foot pedal operated bins were available for hygienic practice. Staff members were observed washing their hands before and after the procedure and all the children's hands were washed before they were brought back to their pre-school rooms.

Handwashing routines were well established, and children were observed washing hands following outdoor and messy play and before meals.

Safe Sleep:

There was a sufficient number of standard cots for children requiring a period of sleep in a cot and low-level beds were available for the children over 2 years of age who slept at a designated time after dinner.

The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance and practice. Ten-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and records maintained of the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children.

The environmental temperature of both sleep rooms when used for sleep was maintained between 16-20° Celsius as there were portable air conditioning units available to control the environmental room temperature.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were kept clear to ensure the prompt evacuation of children in case of a fire both inside and outside. Staff demonstrated an understanding of fire safety measures, including the fire alarm procedures and assembly point and the importance of maintaining an up-to-date attendance record for each child for reference during an evacuation. Regular monthly fire drills were documented.