

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE131
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Naas
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Address of Service:	Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 X211
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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:	24/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	77	PM	77
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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, 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

Description of service

Cocoon Childcare is one of several services operated by the registered provider in Kildare, Dublin and Wicklow and offers full day care, part time and sessional care 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 an office development on the outskirts of Naas. Eight pre-school rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, staff room and office are provided. Play areas are located to the rear and side of the building and carparking is available outside the service.

Staffing

There were twenty-four adults present in the service on the day of the inspection, this included three staff assigned for school age care, seventeen staff working directly with pre-school children inclusive of two staff members providing cover for breaks and one cook. The person in charge and operations manager were present and the registered provider arrived to the service at 11:30am 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4),(7)(a) - Management and Recruitment

Regulation 10 – Policies Procedures etc. of Pre-school Service

Regulation 11(1),(2), (8)(a)- Staffing Levels

Regulation 25(1),(2)(a)(b)- First Aid

Regulation 32(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b), (3)(a)(b), (4) - Complaints

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under:

Regulation 15(1)(f) - Record in Relation to Pre-school Service

Regulation 19(1)(b), (3)- Health Welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

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

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

20 June 2024 - Information was received by the Feedback and Concerns department. The content of the information received, when assessed, triggered an inspection.

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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(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;

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

The records of four staff members, employed since the last inspection, were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Eight 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 two adults employed who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Three 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.

(7)(a)

Staff members working in the rooms inspected, advised the inspector they had received, read and were familiar with the policies of the service and had received induction training on commencing employment; this was evidenced by the completed induction programme records on file for all staff members.

Regular team meetings had taken place and the documented agendas/minutes were reviewed on inspection.

Each staff member had an individual training record which was kept up to date as evidenced following review of the documents on file.

Supporting documentation indicated staff support and supervision meetings take place on a regular basis.

During the probationary period individual meetings are held at two, four and six monthly intervals for new staff members, this was confirmed by the registered provider.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the required written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.

The content of the following policies was reviewed and met the requirement of the regulations:

- Child behaviour management policy
- Baby sleep policy
- Infection control policy
- Staff induction policy
- Staff development and training policy and procedure
- Complaints policy and procedure
- Nappy change and Toileting procedure

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 seventy-seven children attending the service being supervised directly by twenty 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 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:*
- (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;*

Compliance Information

- (f)
Care plans were in place for any child with a specific medical need that may require emergency medication to be administered while attending the service; this was evidenced following review of eight care plans in place for children currently attending the service.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

Regulation 19(1)(b), and 19(3) was assessed in the Junior wobbler and baby rooms.

(1)(b)

Children were observed happy, content and relaxed within their room environments. Babies and the younger children moved freely around their rooms playing with the toys and equipment and exploring their environments. The children's first names were used and gentle touch, positive body language and soft voice tones were observed being used by the staff members caring for them.

There was a sufficient amount of standard cots available for children less than 2 years of age requiring a period of sleep. The children in the Baby room were provided with sleep based on their individual needs. Children in Junior wobbler room slept at a designated time after dinner.

A healthy eating policy was in place and when dinner was brought from the kitchen, the staff members in Junior wobbler room were observed chopping food to mitigate the risk of choking before serving to the children. The children were encouraged to self-feed and bibs were worn to protect their clothing, the staff sat with the children to assist and supervise as needed. The children were offered water in their sippy cups during their meal and water was available in the room throughout the day. The children's hands and faces were cleaned after eating.

Nappy changing was carried out at set times and as needed during the day and staff were observed chatting and interacting in a reassuring manner when changing the children. Childrens hands were washed following nappy changing.

(3)

The staff members in the rooms inspected demonstrated warmth and affection in all interactions with the children and were respectful and kind.

The young children went to the staff members for reassurance and comforting and the staff members quickly responded by lifting and comforting them.

The staff were aware of the behaviour management policy for the service and demonstrated knowledge of appropriate age-appropriate strategies to use when managing children’s behaviour; they also knew the behaviour management practices that were unsuitable and prohibited when caring for children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Baby room

1. The children in the Baby room were not encouraged to self-feed, handle or touch food during dinner time as the staff members spoon fed each child and the bowls of food were placed on the floor out of reach of the children.
2. Staff did not recognise children may need to have a drink of water/milk offered when eating, drinks were only offered to the children after they had finished their meal.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Action

1./2. The centre management team have retrained the baby room staff team on promoting independence at mealtimes, with emphasis on self-feeding and drinks being accessible at all times.

Preventive Action

The centre management team are actively monitoring mealtimes and the centre cook has been requested to deliver two spoons per child when serving foods.

Baby room team members also availed of external training “Facilitating Safe Snack and Mealtimes” focusing on effectively managing meal and snack times, whilst supporting children’s autonomy in self-feeding and strategies for providing a safe and comfortable feeding environment

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents x 2

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the operations manager on behalf of the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 19(1)(b).

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

Infection Control:

The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and written cleaning schedules were in place. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted units, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Gloves, plastic aprons, and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy changing practices and foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, nappies and paper towel. Six nappy changes were observed and staff members followed infection control guidelines during each procedure. Staff members advised the inspector they were aware of the exclusion periods for children/staff diagnosed with a specific infectious illness.

Safe Sleep:

Staff members, caring for sleeping children, were observed carrying out 10-minute sleep checks observations; the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care was documented and this was evidenced following a review of the sleep records maintained for sleeping children for five consecutive days in June 2024.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Children were observed placed in child sized seats on the countertop of the nappy changing station while the staff members applied their gloves and aprons and prepared the area for nappy changing; this practice posed a potential risk to a child should they attempt to get out of the seat and therefore were potentially at risk of falling from a height.

It is acknowledged immediate corrective action was taken when it was brought to the attention of the registered provider, one seat was immediately removed from the area and the remaining seat was placed on the floor.

Management ensured the staff were informed to place the children in the seat on the floor to ensure their safety.

Infection Control:

2. Staff members in the Baby room were observed spoon feeding each child from their individual bowls which were placed on the floor; this posed a risk of cross infection to the young children.
3. The children's hands were not washed prior to eating dinner in the Baby room.

Safe Sleep:

4. The environmental temperatures in the sleep room and Junior wobbler room, which was transitioned to a sleep room at 12:08pm both of which were used to facilitate the sleep needs of children aged 1-2 years, were not maintained between the required temperature of 18°- 22°C for safe sleep purposes, as observed by the following recordings:

- The temperature in the Junior wobbler room ranged from 24.2°C-23.8°C between 12:16-12:18pm and 22.8°C between 12:35-12:55pm.
- The temperature in the sleep room ranged from 23.2°C-23.5°C between 12:08-12:34pm and 23.4°C at 12:55pm.

It is acknowledged that immediate controls were put in place when requested by the inspector, however, the room temperatures did not reduce sufficiently despite the measures implemented over the course of an hour while children were sleeping.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Our Nappy changing policy was updated to include that child is placed into the seat at ground level. All team members have been retrained and understand this requirement.

Infection Control:

2. The centre management team have retrained the baby room staff team on promoting independence at mealtimes, with emphasis on self-feeding and bowls being accessible to children.
3. All team members have been retrained in our handwashing policy.

Safe Sleep:

4. An additional air conditioning unit was purchased and installed on the day of the inspection, covering up to thirty-eight square metres which acts as a cooling agent for both care room and sleep room on warmer days.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents x 6

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the operations manager on behalf of the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 23.

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 trained in first aid response (FAR) were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b)

The first aid equipment was safely stored and in conspicuous positions throughout the premises and were at all times available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

(a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,

(b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and

(c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and

(b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-

(a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and

(b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

Compliance Information

(1) (a),(b),(c)

The complaints policy referred to the procedures outlined in (1)(a),(b),(c).

(2)(a),(b)

Following review of a previous complaint made to the service, the details, outlined in (2)(a),(b) of the regulation were observed to have been followed and recorded.

(3)(a)

The details as required were documented; this was evidenced by the review of a previous complaint made to the service.

(b)

The complaints record was open and available for inspection by the authorised persons.

(4)

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing of any complaint made will be retained for a period of 2 years. This is stated in the complaints policy for the service.