

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

6TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE131			
Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Naas			
Address of Service:	Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare			
Eircode:	W91 X211			
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	27/11/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	94	PM	82
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7 Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W			
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 - Naas is one of a chain of private childcare services located across Kildare, Wicklow and Dublin. The service is located in Millenium Park, an office complex, situated on the outskirts of Naas, Co. Kildare. A full day care service is provided to children aged between 0-6 years old and opening hours are Monday to Friday from 07:15am-18:30pm. Part time care is offered, and sessional care and education is available for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. The service is registered to provide school aged care.

There are eight pre-school rooms, a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen, staff room and an office provided. A large outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises.

Staffing

There were thirty staff members employed in the service. Twenty four people were present in the service on the day of inspection, this included the registered provider who arrived to the service in the morning, the regional manager, person in charge, deputy person in charge, supervisor, one support staff member and one cook.

Seventeen staff members were working directly with the children and the management staff were available to provide support and relief to the care rooms as necessary throughout the day.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

Regulation 27 - Supervision

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby, Wobbler junior and senior rooms, Toddler junior and senior rooms and Pre-school 3 room.

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, regional manager, persons 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b)

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

The records of thirty staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Sixty written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of thirty records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for 30 employed staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for 18 staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Six members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework. Two staff members were in possession of a letter of qualification recognition issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), one staff member was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by the DCEDIY and the qualifications for fifteen staff members were recognised on the DCEDIY list of recognised qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

It is acknowledged that evidence of application for police vetting was received by the inspectorate 29 November 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting was immediately applied for and the staff file is now complete. Both the recruitment department and Centre management teams are now aware of specific country Police Vetting requirements and will ensure correct documentation is available going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of required police vetting document.

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9 (2)(d) has been met.

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 94 children attending the service being supervised directly by 17 staff members during the inspection. Three staff members were also available to provide relief as required to the pre-school rooms throughout the day.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection, this was verified by the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider and the person in charge confirmed that all parents receive a parent’s handbook with information relating to the service. Further relevant information pertaining to the service is provided by email to parents prior to their child commencing in the service. The handbook and information for parents was observed conspicuously displayed in the entrance lobby to the service which parents have full access to on a daily basis when dropping and collecting their children.

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.

(c)

This was open to inspection on the premises when requested from the person in charge by the early years inspector.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

1)(a)

The pre-school rooms inspected had a variety of age-appropriate toys and learning equipment available at an accessible height to facilitate a child-led learning environment. Low level tables and chairs ensured children could sit comfortably for meals and when engaged with tabletop activities. The rooms were bright and spacious and constructively planned with defined areas of interest including home corners, construction areas, libraries, messy/sensorial play, small world, and dress up. In the younger wobbler room, there was equipment for climbing to promote children's gross motor skills and development and there was an emphasis on wooden and natural materials and plenty of sensorial materials for the babies.

There was also a large, bright central area within the building that could be used for various activities to give the children a break from their care rooms and also doubled as the dining room for the main meal of the day.

The outdoor play area to the side of the premises had direct access from five of the eight care rooms and was spacious and suitably equipped to keep the children entertained when playing in the area.

(b)

Comfortable rest areas with soft furnishings were available in each pre-school room inspected should a child wish to take a break from activities during the day and relax, read or avail of some quiet time. Low level beds with appropriate bed linen were available should any child aged 2 years or above require a period of sleep when attending on a full or part time basis.

One cot room with 11 standard cots was provided for any children less than two years of age requiring sleep in a cot on a needs led basis.

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 secured and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and staff members completed indoor and outdoor risk assessments daily to promptly manage any risk(s) identified.

Infection Control:

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. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established and observed.

Gloves, plastic aprons, and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy changing practices. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, nappies and paper towel. Insert toilet seats were observed stored on hooks in the sanitary area to reduce the risk of cross contamination for children.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for all 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 and during conversations with various staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

Staff advised the inspector that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care was documented. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 19.8°Celsius at 11:33am, this was within the recommended temperature of 16-20°C for sleep room environments.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed. Recently inducted staff members also advised the inspector they had been instructed and provided guidance on the emergency evacuation procedures for the service.

Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service.

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 for the pre-school rooms inspected.

(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 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.

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 responder (FAR) were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)

The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the service. Each pre-school room inspected had a recognisable first aid notice displayed advising of the first aid boxes' locations in the building.

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 of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 4 October 2023.

(b)

A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced August 2023, and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 13 October 2023 and is carried out on a quarterly basis.

(4)

Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were observed being supervised in all care rooms inspected, in the sanitary areas as needed, during snack and meal times and sleep periods and in the outdoor play area at all times by the staff members caring for them.