

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA 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: 10/12/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	85	PM	76
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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 and education to children aged 0-6 years. Opening hours are from 07:15am-18:30pm, Monday-Friday. The service operates from a purpose built, single storey premises, located in an office park on the outskirts of Naas. Eight pre-school rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, staff room and office are provided. Seven rooms were operational on the day of inspection. Play areas are located to the rear and side of the building and carparking is available outside the service.

Staffing

There were twenty-five adults present in the service on the day of the inspection, this included twenty-one staff working directly with pre-school children inclusive of three staff members providing relief and support to the rooms and one cook. The deputy person in charge and operations manager were present and the registered provider arrived to the service at 11:15am 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), (3), (4), (7)(a) - Management and Recruitment

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

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under:

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

4 December 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, deputy 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, the deputy person in charge assumed the role of person in charge on the day of inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability, this information was also displayed in the entrance foyer of the service.

The records of 10 staff members, employed since the last inspection, were reviewed.

(2)(a), (b)

Twenty written and verified references from a past employer or a reputable source were available as required in respect of the 10 staff members.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all 10 newly 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 7 newly employed adults who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Nine adults were recently employed to work directly with pre-school children. They all 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.

(7)(a)

There was a comprehensive induction programme completed by all staff on commencement in the service which included the policies and procedures of the service; there was documentary evidence provided of the completed induction programme for staff members.

Regular team meetings had taken place, and the documented agenda/minutes were reviewed on inspection. The meetings also provided staff the opportunity to upskill and refresh their knowledge and learning, this was evident on review of the documented agenda and supporting documentation for one of the team meetings held 25 June 2024. All staff had completed training in child protection as evidenced by the supporting documentation on file.

The person in charge on the day of inspection demonstrated their knowledge of their role and function in relation to child protection and their role as the designated liaison person.

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:

- Student Work Placement and Volunteer policy
- Staff Development and Training policy
- Supervision of Staff policy

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 eighty-five children attending the service being supervised directly by twenty-one 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 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

(1)(b)

In the Baby and junior Wobbler rooms, the children's care needs were attended to in a prompt and sensitive manner by the staff members caring for them. Nappies were changed routinely and as needed during the day and positive interaction between a child and the staff member was observed during a nappy change procedure.

A sufficient number of cots were available to cater for the sleep routines of each child and staff remained with the children to help them settle when placed to sleep and checked the children every 10 minutes recording the child's position, colour and breathing pattern when asleep. The cot room temperature was maintained between 16-20°C for the comfort and safety of sleeping children.

Bibs were used to protect the children's clothing during mealtimes and the children in the junior Wobbler room were encouraged to self-feed and were assisted and supervised by the staff as necessary. Each child in junior Wobbler room had their own labelled sippy cup and drinking water was offered and freely available.

Hand washing routines were well established and children were observed being assisted with hand washing before eating dinner and after nappy changing in both rooms. The children's noses were cleaned as needed and their faces were cleaned after eating. Parents were provided with a written update of their child's day including care given and activities engaged in.

(3)

The children were observed happy, content and relaxed within their pre-school room environments. Staff were observed being respectful towards the children in their care and gentle touch and voice tones were used.

Children's first names were used by the staff and there was emphasis on positive praise and encouragement.

The staff in both rooms, in conversation with the inspectors, were very clear on what are and are not acceptable ways of responding to and caring for children and babies and described how they would comfort and reassure any child if they became upset, tired or distressed. The staff advised they were aware of the prohibited practices not to engage with when caring for children.