

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE132		
Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Celbridge		
Address of Service:	Hazelhatch, Celbridge, Celbridge, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W23 YV48		
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battoms		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	15 November 2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM 57
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:	T. Duignan and F. Maher.		
Titles:	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 provides Full Day Care, Part-time and Sessional education and care to pre-school children aged 1-6 years of age.

The Early Years' Service is located in a purpose-built premises located in a residential development on the outskirts of Celbridge. There are six pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, three nappy changing areas, a kitchen, an office and a staff room. An outdoor play area is located at the rear of the premises. Set down and parking facilities are available outside the premises.

Staffing

There were twenty adults present on the day of inspection and of these sixteen were working directly with the children in the six care rooms. This included two students who were completing their practice placement in the service. The manager of the service was supernumerary and managed the oversight of the service. A staff member was employed to provide support to the care rooms as needed. A chef was also employed, and the operations manager was also present for the duration of the inspection.

All adults working directly with children in the service had completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or had a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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:

Regulation 20(1)(a) – Facilities for rest and play.

Regulation 22 – Food and drink.

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler 1, 2 and 3 rooms and Junior Pre-School 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, person in charge, operations manager, the 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) 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.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place. A notice in the hall stated who the person in charge was. The staff were aware of who was in charge on a daily basis. The records for twenty-two adults were reviewed.
- (2)
- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of twelve staff members and one written and verified past employer reference was available in respect of nine staff members whose records were reviewed.

(b) One written and verified reference from a reputable source other than a past employer was available in respect of nine adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for twenty-two adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for sixteen adults who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Four adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications and fourteen adults held a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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) There were sixty children attending the service being supervised directly by fourteen staff members during the inspection.

(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) The staff roster indicated that they were at least two adults on the premises at all times

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The care rooms were resourced with a wide variety of age-appropriate play and learning equipment and materials for the children based on their age and developmental stage. This included puzzles, shape sorters, stacking shapes, books, rattles, a sand tray, wooden blocks, various connector toys, kitchen area and treasure baskets.

All equipment and materials were accessible to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. The tables and chairs provided were child sized which enabled all children to sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. All equipment and furniture were observed in a clean and well-maintained condition. There was direct access to the outdoor play area from three of the pre-school rooms and there was space to use the ride on equipment, play ball and playground games. There were picnic tables, balance beams, an outdoor kitchen, tyres and a chalk board with chalk.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A four-week menu plan was available to demonstrate that varied nutritious food was provided throughout the day.

A cook was employed, and food was freshly prepared in the service daily.

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the staff members encouraged healthy eating practices with the children. During conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved/mashed or cut food into smaller pieces. The tables were set, and staff members were observed to sit with the children during mealtimes making it an enjoyable and social experience for the children and also to assist the children where needed.

The morning snack served included fresh fruit pieces and milk. The hot meal served was turkey mince, vegetables and mashed potato with milk offered to drink. Children were offered seconds if they requested more food.

Drinking water was freely available in the service and the babies were offered water throughout the day. Bibs were provided for the younger children in the three wobbler rooms to protect their clothing.

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 controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school rooms. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

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.

Nappy changing was carried out, as observed, in line with the nappy change policy of the service. 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.

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.

Written care plans were available for children requiring medication to be administered in the event of an emergency.

Safe Sleep:

Two sleep rooms with a total of twenty cots were in place for children less than 2 years of age and sleep mats were available for all children aged over 2 years requiring sleep. There was an adequate number of cots to provide needs led sleep for young children. The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance and practice. It was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the staff documented the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care. The environmental temperature of the sleep room was maintained between 16°-20° Celsius.

Comfortable rest areas were available in the preschool rooms for any preschool child who wished to rest or take a break from activities.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records were maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed. The staff were aware of the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other emergency.

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.
- (2) Not applicable as this was not a drop-in service.
- (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) training 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 pre-school rooms inspected and immediately available for the children 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 firefighting 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 24 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 and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced August 2023 and 1 November 2023 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 31 January 2024. The insurance provided cover for 116 children.