

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE144		
Name of Service:	Auntie Annes Country Creche		
Address of Service:	Gilltown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	R56 TY27		
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Birchall , Regina Birchall		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	01/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	58	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:	F. Maher, N. McEndoo.		
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

Auntie Annes Country Crèche is a private service located in the countryside in the townland of Gilltown, outside Kilcullen Co. Kildare. A full day care service is provided to children aged between 1-6 years old and opens Monday to Friday from 07:30am-18:00pm. A sessional service is also available for 38 weeks of the pre-school year.

The service operates from a purpose built premises with four pre-school rooms, a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen and office space provided. Several outdoor play areas, including a large, covered play area are located to the rear and side of the premises.

A small carpark is located to the front of the premises.

Staffing

There were seventeen staff members employed in the service, this included both registered providers and two kitchen staff members. Thirteen people were present in the service on the day of inspection, this included two kitchen staff, both registered providers and nine staff members working directly with the children.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspections 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 providers, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 17 staff members employed and/or present in the service, including the registered providers, were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

34 written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of 34 records reviewed.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for 17 employed staff members including the registered providers.

(d)

Police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Thirteen 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 eligibility to practice issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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 58 children attending the service being supervised directly by 11 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)

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 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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(a),(b),(c)

The registered providers ensured that a copy of the regulations was available in the service. 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 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

Physical and material environment

The pre-school room environments were thoughtfully designed, resourced and decorated to create interesting spaces to prompt children to engage in self-directed and imaginative play appropriate to their developmental ages and stages. Interest areas included home corners, construction areas, small world materials, art and craft/messy play areas, dress up, puzzles and jigsaws, natural and open ended materials and sensorial equipment.

In Hazel room a dedicated messy play area was being developed and a large enclosed soft play area was in place for children to explore, investigate and engage in gross motor activities.

Rest areas with comfortable chairs and sofas and library corners were available in all rooms.

All children had use of the secure play areas located at the side and rear of the premises for outdoor play throughout the day. The garden area was arranged with various areas of interest and included a messy play area with mud kitchen and digging area.

A dedicated area to promote gross motor development and balance included, tyres, a climbing frame, wooden bus structure and a swing set. Natural foliage provided shade along with areas to hide and pretend play to encourage children to explore and use their imagination. There was a large, covered annexe to facilitate outdoor play during inclement weather and a covered decking area accessed from Beech room included tables and chairs for tabletop and art and craft activities. A cycle track was provided with plenty of ride on and push/pull equipment and an area with artificial grass with an array of swings that had a retractable canopy allowed use during very hot and/or wet weather. A natural grass area had a large wooden playhouse where children could sit and read or take some quiet time; musical instruments were located in this area to provide a further area of interest and fun.

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 gates to the service were 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 safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members completed indoor and outdoor risk assessments daily to promptly manage any risk(s) identified.

Infection Control:

There was an infection control policy 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. 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.

Bed linen was individual to each child and was sent home weekly to be laundered, spare linen was available as needed.

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. Medicine forms reviewed were completed in full and stored within the individual child's care room.

Safe Sleep:

Staff advised the inspectors that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care was documented. The sleep room was ventilated by means of openable windows to control the environmental room temperature. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 19°C at 11:15am, 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.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The manager of the service ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for each pre-school room.
- (2)
Not applicable as this was not a drop in service.
- (3) (a),(b)
The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

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 boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in each pre-school room in the service 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 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.

(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 February 2023, and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced 8 May 2023.

(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

It was observed that children were supervised at all times both indoors and in the outdoor areas of the service throughout the inspection.

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 29 February 2024. The insurance provided cover for 80 children.