

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK088		
Name of Service:	Thomastown Creche & Montessori		
Address of Service:	48 Maudlin Court, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny		
Eircode:	R95 K403		
Name of Registered Provider:	Gillian Mason, Sylvia Morris		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM 24
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry C Ryan		
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	Not applicable		

Description of service

This full day care service is located in the village of Thomastown in south county Kilkenny. A service is provided to children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 7.30am and 6.15pm and includes a sessional service from 9.00am to 12.30pm for 38 weeks per year. A school age service is also provided. The premise is a detached two-story house situated in a housing estate. The service consists of four preschool rooms; an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) room 1, an ECCE room 2, a wobbler room, a toddler room, a sleep room, toilets, nappy changing facilities and play areas to the front and rear of the service.

Staffing

There are nine staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the preschool children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) a, b (2) a, b,c,d, (4).

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2).

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) a,b.
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child.
Regulation 25 First Aid (1) (2).
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (4).
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

The registered provider was issued with an immediate action notice on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 25 First aid. There was no person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children at all times attending the preschool service. It is acknowledged that the provider responded to the notice promptly to address the non-compliance found on the day of inspection.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were nine staff employed in the service including the registered provider.

(a)

There were 14 written and validated references available on file from past employers and 4 written and validated references from reputable sources.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(2)
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with children ensuring that the correct adult to child ratios were always maintained.
- During the morning there were 26 preschool children being directly cared for by 5 staff. During the afternoon 24 children being directly cared for by 4 staff. The registered provider was also on the premises and was available to assist as needed in the playrooms.

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

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Children in the toddler room 1 enjoyed some free play and engaged in an organised activity on the morning of the inspection. The service had a rota for outside play which included time outside in the morning and afternoon. The atmosphere was relaxed and the staff interactions with the children were kind and gentle. The children enjoyed picking out books for the staff to read for them after dinner in the toddler room 2. There was sufficient toys and materials in the rooms, including dolls house, kitchens, baskets on open shelves, small world, craft material, bricks, cars and books. In ECCE room 1 there was original art work displayed which the children had completed entitled "hands up for Spring".

(b)

Staff were observed to pick up on cues from the children who needed the toilet, and toileting was attended to promptly and calmly. Personal care was attended to with the staff seen cleaning hands and faces after eating. The children settled for a sleep on beds in the room after dinner, with the staff remaining in the room with the sleeping children.

There was chatting and constant interactions between the staff and children throughout the day. Care was given to children's appearance as bibs were put on younger children before eating and their hands and faces were cleaned afterwards. Snacks provided by parents were stored in the fridge in the service. Their water drinks were freely available to them. The children were served a freshly cooked dinner from the onsite kitchen on the day of inspection. The dinner consisted of freshly cooked chicken korma with peas and rice. There was plenty of food available and children were given extra portions if required.

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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

The entrance to the service was secured to ensure that access was restricted to unauthorised persons and children were unable to exit unsupervised. The outdoor area was fully enclosed. Attendance records were maintained daily by staff. Accident and incident forms were reviewed on the day and were observed to be fully and accurately maintained.

Infection control:

The playrooms were clean and well maintained. There was warm water, liquid hand soap and hand towels available in the toilets. Children’s soothers were washed daily and sterilised by staff. The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the sink upstairs in the toilet area was recorded at 33°C on the day of inspection. All bins in the preschool rooms and toilets facilities were pedal operated.

Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication. Medicines supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place in collaboration with parents where required.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a designated sleep room with standard cots for young children to sleep. The staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children’s sleep positions, colour and breathing. The older children slept on sleep mattresses in the room, with staff remaining in the room with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There were inconsistencies observed in handwashing. The inspectors observed that not all children washed their hands consistently before eating.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The children's hands are generally washed after toileting and nappy changing. The registered provider has discussed the importance of handwashing in the service with the staff.

Evidence received.

No evidence received.

Summary Comment

The response received is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection requesting them to address this issue.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider is now trained in a first aid responder course and is available to the children at all times when the service is in operation. The registered provider is planning to book more staff to attend a first aid responder course.

Supporting documentation submitted

A certificate stating the registered provider is qualified in a first aid responder course was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response received is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The requirements of this regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place in the service in March 2024.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2023, and the smoke alarm in March 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had ensured there was adequate insurance in place for the children who were present on the day of inspection.