

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015KY120 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Sunflowers Childcare |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | 4 Pembroke Square, Balloonagh, Tralee, Co. Kerry |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | V92 KT68 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Kate Guerin |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 16/04/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 46 | PM | 33 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | 13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 5DDY |
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| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b> | E. Friel |
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| <b>Title:</b> | Early Years Inspector |
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### 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).

|                                 |     |
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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | N/A |
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### Description of service

Sunflowers Childcare is registered as a full day care service which also provides the options of part-time and sessional services. It is registered to accommodate children aged between 0 – 6 years of age and children currently attending are aged from 14 months to 6 years. Operating hours are from 8.00 am until 6.00 pm and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in the morning from 8.45 am until 11.45 pm.

The service operates from a purposefully converted two-storey house which is in use as a childcare facility. It is located in a residential housing estate in the urban town of Tralee, County Kerry. Upon entry there is a hallway on the ground floor off which there are two care rooms namely the Creche/Wobblers and Toddler. In addition, there is a kitchen, children’s toilets, a separate changing area and a dedicated sleep room for the children from the Creche/Wobbler care room. On the first floor there are two further care rooms namely; Pre-school and Pre-school Activity along with an office, storeroom, adult and children’s toilets. A secure outdoor play area is accessible from the Toddler care room for the children to play at the rear of the service and a carpark is located at the front of the service.

### Staffing

There are thirteen adults who work in the service inclusive of two AIM Support Workers, two kitchen staff and the registered provider who carries out the administration of the service.

### 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.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, manager, assistant manager, 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) The registered provider ensured that there was a manager who was the designated person in charge, an assistant manager and named persons available on the day of inspection.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that the manager, assistant manager or named persons were on the premises at all times.
- (c) A management structure with staff photographs, roles and responsibilities was displayed on a noticeboard in the hallway of the service.
- (2) The recruitment files for all thirteen adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were twenty references and validations from past employers and six references and validations from sources other than past employers.
- (c) (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all thirteen adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) An international police vetting disclosure was on file for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of six months or long as an adult.
- (4) Eleven adults held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The remaining adults did not require childcare qualifications.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(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

(2) The following care rooms had the minimum adult/child ratios at all times.

| Room/ age range                                 | Adults | Children (am) | Children (pm) |
|---|--------|---------------|---------------|
| Creche/Wobblers (15 months – 2 years 2 months)  | 2      | 8             | 8             |
| Toddlers (2 years -3 years)                     | 3      | 11            | 7             |
| Pre-school Activity (2 years 8 months -3 years) | 1      | 11            |               |

(8) (a) The staff roster indicated that there were two adults on the premises at all times.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(2) While the minimum adult/child ratio were met in the morning in the Pre-school care with sixteen children in attendance with three adults, the adult/child ratio was not met in the Pre-school care room in the afternoon. The inspector observed at 13.05 pm that eighteen children were in attendance with two staff members, where three staff members were required. This posed the potential risk that the children may not have been adequately supervised. The sessional service, where the adult/child ratio was 1:11, had finished at 11.45 am and the part-time/full day care adult/child ratio was to 1:8 in the afternoon. In conversation staff stated that two children were due to go home at 1.30 pm.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

(2) Management will ensure that the minimum/adult ratios are in place at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

(2) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 11 (2) has been addressed.

## 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.

### Compliance Information

#### **BASIC NEEDS:**

- The service promoted healthy eating, with food and snacks observed being provided at regular intervals throughout the day which is prepared in kitchen. The service provides breakfast after 8.00 am and watermelon cubes and banana were observed being served from 10.00 am in the Pre-school care room. Children who wanted more were facilitated and children who did not want fruit were offered crackers. Lunch in the Toddler room was served immediately when it arrived at mid-day and the children were observed eating chicken curry, vegetables and pitta bread. The mid-afternoon snack of brioche and fruit was served at 3.00 pm and a further light snack was available at 5.00, if required.
- Water was available at all times in each care room. A new procedure to ensure children in the Creche/Wobbler room were able to access their water bottles independently was observed in practice and was new since the last inspection. Children were able to access their drinks independently from a secure door storage organiser. Each child's bottle was contained in an individual pocket which had their photograph placed at the children's height.

- Children in the Pre-school room were observed accessing the toilet independently, adults were nearby to provide assistance and reminders to wash hands after toileting.
- Nappy changing in the Creche/Wobbler and Toddler care rooms was carried out regularly and was observed to be handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Disposable gloves and aprons were worn between each change and nappies were disposed of in sealed, lidded and pedal operated bin.
- Each care room had a quiet rest area where the children could sit away from other children and noisy activities. The rest/quiet area of the Creche/Wobbler was supplied with a large circular padded floor cushion and four soft cushions while the Toddler rest/quiet area had a three-seater cloud/rainbow vinyl sofa and vinyl cushions. A small wooden book rack where children could easily access books was located in the area for children's convenience.
- The adults in the Creche/Wobbler room were observed to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the children, supporting them to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing toys and equipment.

#### **SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:**

- A keyworker system was in place in the service with named staff responsible for a creating a relationship with a designated group of children and their parents. Staff stated that parents/guardians are able to speak with the keyworker about any concerns they may have about their child.
- During meals and activities staff were observed sitting at the table and engaging in social conversation with the children. A staff member in the Creche/Wobbler room was observed interacting positively during a bottle feed with a child on her lap. Children were encouraged and supported to feed themselves and staff assisted, where required, with peeling bananas in the Pre-school room.
- Staff stated they work in partnership with parents/guardians in the service. Various forms of communication were stated as being used including speaking to the parents/guardians at drop off and collection and a messaging group. The Creche/Wobbler and the Toddler rooms used a pink slip to provided parents/guardians with a daily account of their child's eating, sleeping and toileting, these were furnished to the inspector while in the rooms.
- Monthly staff meetings were stated as taking place, with management meeting each staff member beforehand to discuss any individual requirements. Staff stated topics for discussion at the staff meetings included training, cleaning, opening and closing of the service and the children's individual needs.

## PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Each room was laid out in clearly defined areas with children observed playing with resources and materials which provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas.
- The Creche/Wobbler care room had been reconfigured since the last inspection and the children had access to the whole room. Play materials were presented in baskets on low-level shelving, at the children's level, encouraging choice and increasing the children's independence.
- Children in the Creche/Wobbler care room were observed having fun taking family pictures, with a non-abrasive fastener on the back, off and sticking them back on the walls.
- A range of books were available in the book areas of each care room which supported children's language and staff in the Pre-school care room were heard reading books including "Little Chick" to the children.
- Children from the Toddler care room were observed in the outdoor play area. This area provided an alternative environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed area in which the entire surface was covered in safety matting. Children had access to a range of equipment which encouraged the use of their gross motor skills including a caterpillar tunnel for crawling through, a climbing frame, slide, balance bikes and tricycles for cycling. A play house with resources was available for imaginary play and troughs were in use for sensory materials.

## 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:

- Internal doors were secured, preventing children accessing unsafe areas.
- The external door was secured upon arrival. Entry was by a buzzer system which was answered by a staff member ensuring that unauthorised adults could not enter the building or that children could leave unsupervised.
- Butterfly stickers were visible on the windows of the Toddler care room ensuring that children would not bang into them.

- Windows were made safe to prevent children exiting from them.
- Blind cords, in all care rooms, were observed to be secured with hooks which were out of reach of the children.
- The staircase was adequately lit from artificial lights on the ceiling.
- The floor covering, on the stairs, was secured and in good condition ensuring that there were no tripping hazards.
- All indoor toys appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Equipment and storage units were anchored to prevent them from tipping or falling onto a child.
- All flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.
- Outdoor storage bins were secured behind a metal gate ensuring the children could not gain access to them.
- Cleaning agents, in all of the rooms, were stored on high shelving which was inaccessible to the children.
- The kitchen door was kept closed to prevent the children accessing an unsafe area.
- The outdoor play area, at the rear of the service, was secured with high concrete walls and three metal gates. The gates were high and fitted with sliding bolts which were not accessible to adults on the outside of the building.

### Infection Control:

- Adults and children had access to thermostatically controlled hot water, dispensing soap and paper towels for hygienic handwashing. The thermostatically controlled hot water ranged from 36°C to 43°C.
- Children in the Pre-school Toddler care rooms were observed washing their hands before and after food, toileting and outdoor play. An adult was nearby assist, if required.
- Staff in the Pre-school room were observed sanitising the tables with disinfectant spray and drying with disposable paper towels.
- Floors in the Pre-school care room were observed being swept after meals, ensuring the area was kept safe and clean.
- The inspector observed that the nappy changing mats and areas were well maintained in the Creche/Wobbler and Toddler care rooms. Staff had access to disposable aprons and gloves, the children's personal belongings were located in labelled baskets nearby. The window in the Toddler room was open providing fresh air and there was mechanical ventilation available in the Creche/Wobbler changing area.
- Cleaning records in the Toddler care room were observed to be completed and up to date.
- All staff serving food throughout the day were observed wearing disposable aprons and gloves.

### Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medications were available which were suitable for both younger and older children. These were stored in their original containers and placed out of reach of the children in the office.

### Safe Sleep:

- A total of four cots were available in the dedicated sleep room of the Creche/Wobblers. Sleep in the Creche/Wobbler sleep room was child led. One child was observed sleeping in a cot at in the morning at 11.40 am and a second child was observed sleeping at 12.50 pm. Each mattress was fitted with a waterproof protector and cellular blankets were available for each child. There was ambient lighting in the room and the room temperature was recorded as 18.4°C. The inspector was presented with the records of the ten-minute physical sleep checks which were carried out on each child.
- The inspector observed, at 12.35 pm, that there were six children asleep on stackable beds in one area of the Creche/Wobbler care room, each child was over two years old. This was one of two areas in the room, in use after lunch, which was separated from the other side by a closing divider that split the room into two completely separate areas. The inspector was furnished with records of the ten-minute sleep checks which evidenced that staff were recording each child's colour, position and breathing. The beds were placed at least 50 cm apart, each bed was labelled, and the children had their own individual bed linen. A staff member stayed in the room until all of the children had fallen asleep.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were unobstructed in the Creche/Wobbler and Toddler care rooms and had been fitted with safety latches since the last inspection. This ensured that the children in the Creche/Wobbler room could not open the push bar fire door accidentally, which led out into the carpark.
- The fire assembly point was located a suitable distance from the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- (1) A wooden slat was observed hanging loose from the roof of the climbing equipment in the outdoor play area, posing a safety risk should it fall off and hit a child standing below it.

#### Infection Control:

- (2) Two bins in use in the Pre-school toilets were open at the top with no lids. Disposable gloves and used paper towels were visible and accessible to the children, posing a risk of cross contamination should the children come into contact with the used materials when disposing of paper waste.

## Safe Sleep:

- (3) The inspector observed, at 12.50 pm, that there were two children, under two years old, asleep in bouncers on the floor of one of the separated areas of the Creche/Wobbler care room. Bouncers are not considered appropriate for use for sleep as they pose a safety risk due to the children's semi-upright position in the bouncers which has the potential to cause an airway obstruction while asleep.
- (4) Two cots in the Creche/Wobbler dedicated sleep room were observed placed next to a radiator, posing a risk that a child placed in either cot could become overheated.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

#### General Safety:

- (1) The slat was removed, and the climbing equipment has been added to the safety checks. Regular checks will be conducted by maintenance personnel.

#### Infection Control:

- (2) The bins were removed and replaced the following day. Staff will ensure that damaged items are removed immediately and management will be informed.

#### Safe Sleep:

- (3) The two bouncers were removed, and parents informed that the children would be sleeping in cots in future.
- (4) The cots were moved away from the radiators. Staff will ensure that the cots are not placed next to radiators in the future.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographs and policy were received in the office of the inspectorate;

#### General Safety:

- (1) A photograph of the slat removed on the outdoor climbing apparatus.

#### Infection Control:

- (2) Photographs of three new bins with pedal operated lids.

#### Safe Sleep:

- (3) Copy of the service's sleep policy which states that bouncers are not used for sleep.
- (4) A photograph of the repositioned cots located away from the radiators.

## Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

## 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) Certificates were available to evidence that ten staff members had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The staff roster confirmed that adults trained in FAR were available at all times.

(2) (a) (b) First aid boxes within reach of the adults, in each care room and in the office, were available 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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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) Written records of monthly fire drills were available in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated 25 March 2024, with previous dates noted as 19 February 2024 and 17 January 2024.
  - (b) Written records were available recording the number, type and maintenance records of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment record was dated 17 February 2024 and the smoke alarm record was dated 2 May 2023.
- (2)
- (c) All records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review by the inspector.
- (4) Fire drill routines were visible on the walls of the care rooms.