

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LD018 |
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| Name of Service: | ABC Childcare Stonepark |
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| Address of Service: | Number 9, The Rocks, Stonepark, Longford, Co. Longford |
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| Eircode: | N39 X579 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Collette Brennan |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Dates of Inspection: | 09/10/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 35 | PM | 29 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | A Kennedy and M Farrell |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

The service offers full day care and part time care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs, for children aged between 0 to 6 years, from Monday to Friday. Additionally, an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programmes and sessional care programmes is offered. The service also operates a breakfast club and afterschool programme for school aged children. The service is registered to cater for a maximum number of 50 children, at any one time.

There are five playrooms, the Baby room, the Toddler room, and the ECCE 2 on the ground floor, while the ECCE room 1 and the senior toddler room are on the first floor. There is a building in the outdoor area, named the 'blue shed / art room' used by the school aged children.

There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site.

There is a sleep room on the ground floor with seven cots available for younger children requiring sleep provision. Additionally, there are eight stackable beds, for older children's sleep provision. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are fourteen staff employed including the area manager who works between a number of services. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a designated chef who prepares, cooks, and serves the service meals / snacks.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29 and 30, however on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 regional childcare manager, the 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.*

(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 named designated person in charge in the service and a named staff member to deputise as required in their absence.
- (b) The deputy designated person in charge was present in the service on the inspectors' unannounced arrival. The designated person in charge was also present in the service for the afternoon of the inspection.
- (2) There were fourteen staff members working in the service including the area manager that worked between several services.
- The following vetting documents were available on file in the service for the fourteen staff members:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers including their most recent employer for 10 staff members and one written reference from their past employer was available for 3 staff.
- (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available for three staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all fourteen staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) The required international police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside of the country for more than six months as an adult

- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for 11 staff members who worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting and qualification documentation was unavailable on file:

- (2)
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers were required for one adult who had previous employments.
- (4) There was insufficient evidence available to show that qualifications for one staff member met the requirements of the regulation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) New references from previous employment have been obtained for the staff member in question. The service's detailed list of the requirements pre-employment has been updated to state references must be from the most recent employers. In future, the service will ensure that any staff who does not have a reference from their most recent employer will provide evidence that they have exhausted all avenues to try to obtain one, prior to their employment commencing.
- (4) A letter of eligibility to practice has been obtained from the relevant body.
- If a staff member has a qualification that is not on the list of recognised qualifications, the said qualification will be checked before commencement of employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references and letter of eligibility.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Inspectorate and deemed to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found under Regulation 9 on inspection.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore 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) and (2)

On the morning of the inspection, there were 35 children present:

- 3 children under 1 year,
- 8 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 5 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 19 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were seven staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, a staff member, the person in charge and the regional childcare manager acted as childcare relief.

There was a chef designated to kitchen duties, preparing, and serving the service meals.

In the afternoon, at 13:40.00hrs, there were 29 children present:

- 2 children under 1 year
- 8 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 5 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 14 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were seven staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, a staff member, the person in charge and the regional childcare manager acted as childcare relief.

(8)(a) Discussion with staff found that there had been two staff members present in the service from 8am when one child was recorded as present in the service. See Regulation 16 (i) for further information.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

10 children's records were sampled from across the five playrooms for review by the inspectors. The children's records were found to contain the information required to be held under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required records were made readily available to the inspectors by the staff members on request.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) One of the staff members informed the inspectors that they were present in the service from 8am. However, the daily staff roster and staff attendance records inaccurately recorded that they had been present in the service from 9am.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (i) The service has updated the rota for that week and completed a new table with clear staffing information. All staff have been made aware that they must sign in on arrival in the service and keep record of their location. The service's revised rota clearly shows what area each staff is in on arrival.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of revised staff rota.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Inspectorate and deemed to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

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

Mealtimes were appropriately scheduled on the day of the inspection. A three-week menu was available in the service for parents information. Snacks were provided by the service midmorning with the younger children attending given pureed and chopped fruit, and toast. Cereal was available for children who had not eaten breakfast before attending the service. Drinks of water were readily available throughout the day and given to the children by the staff in the children's individual cups, drinking bottles or beakers. The main meal on the day

provided by the service was bacon, mashed potato and mixed vegetables served in bowls for the younger children and on plates for the older children with age-appropriate cutlery provided. Additional extra portions were provided for some children who wanted extra food. An alternative dish was given to children who did not want to eat the main meal.

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 main entrance door to the service was appropriately secured during the inspection allowing the staff to control access to the service and prevent children from leaving unnoticed. The inspectors were admitted by staff following production of identification documents. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them on the day. The external play areas to the side and rear of the premises were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area. Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed. Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard. The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C. All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.

Infection Control:

The service was found to be clean, and staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables and highchairs after use. Staff kept written records of cleaning procedures carried out in the service. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying purposes with children and staff cleaning their hands regularly. Aprons and gloves were used appropriately by staff when changing children's nappies with changing mats cleaned down after use. There was separate storage of children's personal items such as nappies and cleansing wipes. Individual storage containers were provided for children's soothers. Boxes of tissues were available in the playrooms. Windows were opened by staff at times to ventilate the playrooms.

Administration of Medication:

On the day of inspection, there were no medication administered to any child on the premises. The staff demonstrated to the inspectors, their knowledge of best practice with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication, should it be required.

Safe Sleep:

There was a designated sleep room with seven cots for younger children's sleep provision. Eight stackable beds were available for older children requiring sleep if required. On the day of inspection, children were observed sleeping on demand. The sleep policy detailed the correct temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements. The inspectors observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes. The service kept documented sleep records. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child and the signature of the staff member who checks the sleeping child. A thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20°C and below 16°C. A supply of clean linen was available for each child.

Age/tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets, that allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 2 years of age.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for fourteen staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and was not in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. A blind cord on one of the windows in the Senior Toddler playroom was observed to be unsecured posing a potential risk to children during the inspection. It is acknowledged that a staff member immediately secured the blind cord when this was brought to their attention by the inspectors.
3. There was a metal screw found on the floor of the Senior Toddler playroom by the inspectors that posed a safety risk to children. The metal screw was immediately removed by staff when highlighted to them by the inspectors.
4. There were gaps between the impact absorbent tiles in the outdoor area that posed potential risks of tripping to children and staff.
5. A three-drawer unit in the baby room was unsecured and required securing to prevent access by the children.

Infection Control:

- The foot pedal on the nappy bin in the nappy changing area off the toddler room was broken and required replacement.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Garda vetting has been updated for the staff member in question. A quarterly staff file checklist has been created to ensure all files are checked quarterly for expiry dates of garda vetting to be completed by centre manager.
- This was addressed on the day of inspection. Classroom checklists have been updated to include review of blind cords.
- This was addressed on the day of inspection. Checking toys for any loose parts has been added to the a checklist to form part of the classrooms daily risk assessment routines.
- The mats in the outdoor play area have all been pushed closer together removing any gaps. The service's outdoor maintenance checklist has been updated to include checking that all mats are securely in place with no gaps.
- Securing devices have been placed on each drawer. Securing devices will immediately be put on any new drawers purchased for the service.

Infection Control:

- A new foot operated bin has been purchased. The changing room risk assessment has been updated to ensure bins are in correct working order.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copies of a garda vetting renewal, checklist for staff files, cleaning and safety checklists, photographs and risk assessment.

Infection Control:

Copy of cleaning checklist and photograph.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances found under Regulation 23 have been satisfactorily addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the service.

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) Four staff members held up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training certificates.
- (2) (a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in clearly labelled locations in the downstairs hallway and upstairs in the ECCE 1 playroom.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance in place for the maximum of children registered attending services at any one time. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (e) The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for the numbers of children attending.
- The water pressure in the taps in the sanitary area for the children in the ECCE room one was adequate to enable effective handwashing, and the magnets were intact on the doors of the cubicles in the sanitary area.

Non-Compliance Information

- (a) A boundary wall at the lower end of the outdoor area to the rear of the premises was damaged with large deep cracks and posed a potential safety risk to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

- (a)
- Corrective and Preventive Action**
- Builders rebuilt the boundary wall to remove any potential safety risk. In future any play areas where staff identify a potential safety risk will be closed off from use until the risk has been addressed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the repaired boundary wall and copy of outdoor safety checklist.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

(4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,

the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1) Adequate floor space was provided in the five playrooms for the free movement of children to work and play.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum clear floor space is adhered to for pre-school children.

(4) As indicated on the table below, the clear floor space requirement relates to the age range of the children attending the playroom.

| Room Names | Square Metres | Service Type | Service age range of pre-school children in the room | Schedule 6 Age Range | Clear Floor Space | Maximum number of children for age range | Number of children present on day of inspection |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Baby Room | 16.19m ² | Full Day Care | 6 to 18 months | 0 to 1 year | 3.5 square metres | 5 children | 3 children under 12months FDC |
| | | | | 1 to 2 years | 2.8 square metres | 6 children | |
| Toddler Room 1 | 33.58m ² | Full Day Care | 1 to 2 years | 1 to 2 years | 2.35 square metres | 14 children | 8 children aged 1 to 2 years FDC |
| ECCE room 2 | 15.11m ² | Full Day Care | 3 to 6 years | 3 to 6 years | 2.35 square metre | 6 children | 5 children aged 3 to-6yrs (2 sessional and 3 FDC) |

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
| ECCE room1 | 30.34m ² | Full Day Care ECCE | 2 years and 6 months to 6 years of age | 2 to 3 years 3 to 6 years ECCE only | 2.35 square metres 2.3 square metres 1.81 square metres | 14 children 13 children 17 children | 3 children aged 2 to 3 years 11 children aged 3 to 6 years 3 sessional and 11 FDC |
| Senior Toddler room | 13.36m ² | Full Day Care | 2 to 3 years | 2 to 3 years | 2.35 square metres | 6 children | 5 children aged 2 to 3 years FDC |