

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH010
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Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings
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Address of Service:	257 Lower Point Rd, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 RW20
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhla McGivern
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	15/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Flood & S. Skinnader
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
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Description of service

Bright Beginnings is a privately owned service that has been in operation since August 2004. It provides Sessional, Part-time and Full Day Care services to pre-school children from 2-6 years of age.

The service operates from a purpose built two storey building that adjoins the registered provider's private dwelling. This area comprises of 4 care rooms that have recently been renamed as The Lavender Room and The Bluebell Room located on the ground floor. The Sunflower and Daisy Rooms are located on the 1st floor. Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary facilities, a kitchen area, a separate sleep room off the Lavender Room, an office and storage area. An additional 5th room is located in a separate building to the rear of the registered provider's own home. This area consists of a purposely developed playroom namely the Poppy Room, with additional sanitary facilities and a kitchenette area within the playroom.

Staffing

The registered provider and 11 childcare staff work directly with the pre-school children on a daily basis. One additional adult attends the service occasionally to carry out maintenance work.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 20, 22, 25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 23. 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 registered provider, 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and a named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 13 members of staff which included the registered provider and maintenance person.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each member of staff in the service including the registered provider and one adult who attends the service to carry out maintenance duties.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not required at this time.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 10 out of 12 members of staff, who work directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to demonstrate that two members of staff, who work directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications. It is acknowledged that documentary evidence of “a provisional statement of results” of a childcare qualification was available for one these staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated they will ensure staff files are always up to date and that each staff member holds a minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the minimum required childcare qualification for one staff member was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance has not been adequately addressed as evidence of a childcare qualification for one staff member still has not been submitted.

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) On the day of inspection when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10:30 there were four rooms in operation. During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult:child ratios were observed the four care rooms:

The Bluebell Room: There were 7 preschool children aged between 2 to 3 years present with 2 staff members.

The Sunflower Room: There were 12 preschool children aged between 3 to 4 years present with 3 staff members.

The Daisy Room: There were 8 preschool children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 3 years and 8 months present with 1 staff member.

The Poppy Room: There were 10 preschool children aged between 3 to 5 years present with 1 staff member. The deputy person in charge was also present in this room to provide assistance.

The registered provider assisted as required in the Daisy Room.

The Lavender Room was not in use during the inspection and was used as an access point for the adjoining sleep room and nappy changing area.

(8)(a) Following a discussion with the person in charge and a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records, this information demonstrated that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Information including each staff member’s experience and training records were maintained within the staff files, that were reviewed on the premises.

(b) - (f) The information specified in sub-sections (b) to (f) in this regulation were on display in the service or documented in the policy and procedures documents which were available at various “information points” on the premises.

(g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10.

(h) Details of children’s daily attendance including arrival and departure times were recorded in attendance records within the service for the Sunflower, Bluebell and Daisy Rooms.

(i) An up-to-date weekly staff roster was available, plus staff attendance and departure records were maintained on a daily basis.

(j) Following a review of a sample of medication administration forms maintained in the service, these were found to be complete. These forms were signed by the child’s parent or guardian to document that, before leaving the service, they had been informed and were aware of what medication was given to their child during the course of the day and at what time.

(k) Documented records were available of accidents or incidents that occurred on the premises.

(3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection as requested by the inspectors.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) Documentary evidence was not always recorded of the daily arrival and departure times of the preschool children attending the Poppy Room. While it is acknowledged that the attendance of the children attending the Poppy room on the day of the inspection was recorded, there were no documents available for the arrival and departure times of the children for the previous 3 days.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider spoke to the staff member in charge of the room and an assurance was given going forward, that the daily arrival and departure times of the preschool children would be recorded.

Regular checks to ensure every room register is completed on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of completed attendance records for the preschool children with the arrival and departure times documented.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection.

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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.
- A separate sleep area was located off the Lavender room and contained 2 raised day beds suitable for children under 2 years of age. A number of day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were also available.

(3) The outdoor area was located to the rear of the premises. It was enclosed and gated and had a variety of surfaces including a grass area, a paved area and safety surfacing. A number of interest areas were available including a mud kitchen, a wooden hut underneath the tree, 2 partially covered areas which are used as outdoor

classrooms and have tables and chairs for seating. The safety matted area although not in use during the inspection contained a climbing frame, a swing seat a wooden rocker. A wooden shed was also available for the storage of toys.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) Although not accessed on the day of the inspection due to heavy rain, large accumulations of leaves were observed in the outdoor area. There was no evidence that this potential risk was identified on the outdoor daily risk assessment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) Normally, the risk assessment is conducted before the children go out to play. The registered provider is to ensure a member of staff completes the risk assessment whether the children remain indoors or go outside. The registered provider to talk to the caretaker to ensure any leaves or debris are cleaned up immediately to ensure the children's safety.

Supporting documentation submitted

Risk assessment template document for the outdoor area.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next 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

On the day of the inspection the lunch time dinner was provided at 12:30 and was observed to consist of chicken curry and rice. All hot meals provided in the service are supplied by an external catering company and reheated by the service. All snacks are supplied by the parents. When questioned staff were also able to describe what alternative snacks were available for the children who did not like the meal or forgot their lunch.

Potable drinking water was available for the children to access as required in all rooms. The children's drinks bottles were stored on a low-level shelf and were therefore accessible to the children when they needed a drink. Staff assisted children as necessary with their dinner and independence with feeding was also promoted.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The designated emergency exit doors and hallways were clear and unobstructed.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or made inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments were evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities.

- All waste bins were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

Infection Control:

- There was not a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water in the service. In the nappy changing area off the Lavender Room the water in the hot water tap was cold. Additionally, there was not a supply of single use towels or liquid soap available to support effective hand washing.
There was no hot water in the two hot water taps of the two sinks in the upstairs sanitary accommodation.
- One staff member observed carrying out nappy changes did not wash their hands between children's nappy changes. Similarly, the children's hands were not washed following their nappy change.
- The changing mat in use in the nappy changing area was not wiped down between uses as per the services nappy changing policy and best practice guidelines.

General Safety:

- There were unprotected sharp edges on some of the shelving units in the care rooms which are a potential injury hazard.
- In the Sunflower Room the electrical lead from the CD player was trailing and accessible to the preschool children. This is a safety risk.
- The CD players in the Sunflower and Daisy Rooms were unsecured, accessible to the preschool children and potential impact hazards.
- In the Sunshine Room the lock on the cupboard under the sink was broken. The cupboard contained cream cleaner which was potentially accessible to the children.

Safe Sleep:

- The safe sleep observation records available and reviewed in the service were incomplete and did not contain the actual observations made at each 10-minute check. A "sign" was used rather than staff documenting the actual observations made. Additionally, the staff member carrying out the observations had not signed the record on 3 occasions.
- There was not a member of staff present in the sleep room at all times to supervise a child over 2 years of age who was placed down to sleep on a daybed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The service has a combined water heating system and the combi boiler had been turned off earlier in error.
Staff have all been shown how turn the heating off with disrupting the water heating process.
A checklist has been compiled with a staff member allocated to check all bathroom and sanitary areas to ensure an adequate amount of soap and single use hand towels are available for effective handwashing at
Water systems are checked to ensure they are on and working. Staff must report to their supervisor immediately if they notice the water is cold or sanitary supplies are low.
2. Staff training has been completed in relation to the nappy changing policy. All staff are now aware of the importance of complying with the policy when changing children's nappies.
3. Staff have been retrained on the nappy changing policy.

General Safety:

4. All the sharp edges have been covered with protective foam to ensure there are no injury hazards.
5. The leads from the CD players have all been pinned up out of reach of the children.
6. The lock on the cupboard has been replaced to ensure children do not have access to any cleaning products.
7. A checklist has been put in place to identify any hazards.

Safe Sleep:

8. Staff have been informed to ensure sleep records are to be completed correctly and in full.
9. A member of staff is now present when a child is sleeping. Staff have been retrained on the sleeping policy. Weekly meetings have been in place to address any issues that have arisen during the week.

This includes forms been filled in properly and all tasks undertaken must be in line with Bright Beginnings Policies. Policies are reviewed at meetings to ensure every staff member knows their responsibilities and the correct procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Risk assessment template documents for the outdoor area, nappy changing and care rooms.
- Completed sleep observation log.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection.

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) and (b) The first aid box available in the service were stored in conspicuous location in the service and was available at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in first aid (First Aid Responder) was always available to the Pre-school children. From a review of qualifications available and the weekly staff rota there was one member of staff with an up to date FAR qualification in the service, therefore cover is not available when this staff member is absent from the service on leave.

(2) The first aid box was not suitably equipped as it did not include eye pads or antiseptic wipes.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider has employed a new staff member who is a certified First Aid Responder. The registered provider to ensure that at least 2 members of certified (First Aid Responder) staff are in the Creche at all times.
- (2) Eye pads and antiseptic wipes have been bought and stocked in the First Aid Box.

Regular monthly checks to ensure the First Aid box is suitably equipped.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentary evidence of an up-to-date insurance certificate was on display in the service and which detailed adequate cover for 59 children on a full day care basis, which expires on 27/03/2024.