

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LH035 | | | | |
| Name of Service: | The Holy Family Parish Community Creche | | | | |
| Address of Service: | 2 Grange Close, Muirhevnamore, Dundalk, Co. Louth | | | | |
| Eircode: | A91 X36X | | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Marie Flynn | | | | |
| Service type: | Full Day | | | | |
| Date(s) of Inspection: | 18/10/2023 | | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>35</td> <td>PM</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table> | AM | 35 | PM | 30 |
| AM | 35 | PM | 30 | | |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

The Holy Family Parish Community Creche is a community-based service, managed by a voluntary committee and in operation since 1997. The service provides full day care; part- time and sessional care to pre-school children from 0-6 years. The maximum number of children that be accommodated is 41 and the service operates from 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday – Friday.

The service operates from a renovated public building within a residential area of Dundalk town. There is off street parking available for parental drop off and collection. There are 3 care rooms in operation namely The Waddler Room, The Toddler Room and The Baby Room. There are 2 dedicated sleep rooms and an outdoor play area on the premises.

Staffing

There are 23 staff employed in the service and 1 student including the following:

- Sixteen childcare staff who work directly with the pre-school children, which includes the designated person in charge and deputy person and staff who provide relief in the service.
- Seven staff members who are employed to carry out catering and cleaning duties, caretaker and administrative duties.
- One student who attends the service on a college placement.

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 9,11,19,20, and 25 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a 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 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 and named deputy person to deputise as required. The service manager who is the designated person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspectors arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) There were 23 staff files and 1 student file presented for inspection and the following were reviewed:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for each of the 23 staff and 1 student present in the service.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each member of staff and student in the service.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, 2 international police vetting's were available for 1 staff member and vetting was also available for 3 other staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than six months

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 15 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 of a childcare qualification that meets the minimum Level 5 requirement was not available for 1 staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A copy of the staff member's qualification was sent to the Preschool inspector.

A check list will be put in place to make sure the certificates are received in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the minimum required childcare qualification

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 been addressed.

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 there were three rooms in operation. There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending each of the care rooms.

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

The Baby Room: There were 7 preschool children aged between 7 months to 1 years and 7 months present with 3 staff members. A 4th member of staff commenced work in the room at 12 midday.

The Toddler Room: There were 20 preschool children aged between 1-2 years present with 3 staff members.

The Waddler Room: There were 8 preschool children aged between 1-2 years present with 3 staff members. One student was also present in this room.

The designated person in charge and deputy person were present in the service and were engaged in administrative duties. They were also available to provide assistance in the care rooms as required.

Five additional adults were present in the service and were engaged in catering, cleaning, caretaking, and administrative duties.

(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 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) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service.

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted in the service and there was a menu on display. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves and assistance was also provided if required. In the Baby Room the dinners were of a suitable consistency for the age and development of the children. Mealtimes were observed to be a social occasion with staff observed sitting at the tables and encouraging conversation with the group, and in the Baby Room the staff sat at eye level with the children while feeding them in highchairs. Drinking water was freely available to the children.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children who were toilet trained and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.
- Nappies were changed regularly in a timely manner with lots of friendly interaction observed between children and staff in all rooms.
- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before mealtimes and after toileting; soiled clothes were changed promptly and noses were wiped frequently.
- Some of the children were observed to use the soft areas in all rooms to access the sensory area, read a book, or to take a break from activities.
- The majority of children from the care rooms had a change of environment to the outdoor play area and were dressed appropriately for going outside.

Supporting Relationships

- Parents and guardians were informally communicated with at drop off and collection times. The staff reported that most communication with parents was via the electronic application in use in the service. This communicated each child's care needs such as sleep time, toileting, meals and also the activities that the children engaged in throughout the day. The children's learning stories are also included for parents to access each day.
- The staff throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms and transitions between activities were organised and swift. The language used by the staff in the service was positive, encouraging and kind e.g., "...thank you very much for giving me that...now where does it go ...?" "I will have to tell mammy that you did that all by yourself Will we take a picture and send it to her"
- Staff sat with the children during activities on the floor and at tables and children were observed to actively seek out staff members. Equally children who did not wish to partake in a particular activity were also supported.
- A key worker system was in place in the service with named staff assigned the responsibility for developing relationships with a designated group of children and their families in all rooms. This promotes the development and sustainment of relationships between the staff and the children and their parents.

Physical And Material Environment:

- The care rooms were spacious and well laid out. Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service.
- In each room there was a variety of play materials and equipment. There were defined areas of interest that were supported with play materials and equipment. The equipment was suited to the ages of the children present and promoted many areas of child development .

Programme of Activities

- The children attending each of the care rooms were observed to engage in a variety of activities throughout the inspection e.g., table- top activities, story time, free play, sensory play, art activities and outdoor play.
- Documentary evidence was available of ongoing observations which the staff reported were used to inform planning for the curriculum. Many of the activities were child led and the children’s choice was facilitated e.g., Chia seeds slime, playdough and sensory trays with cooked spaghetti and crumbed corn snacks. Learning journals had been commenced on the electronic application and there was a Learning Journal completed for each room and on display for the parents to review.
- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in each room which was reflective of some of the planned activities displayed e.g. In the Baby Room there were footprint ghosts, handprint spiders and witches hat paintings.
In the Waddler and Toddler Rooms there were a variety of painted and colouring pictures of ‘ghosts,’ spider handprints, ‘mummies,’ spooky season colouring pictures, “pumpkins, “trick or treat smell my feet” prints and witches’ hats.

Non-Compliance Information

Physical and Material Environment:

1. In the Baby Room there was no adult chair for a member of staff to sit comfortably and nurse or feed a child. One staff member was observed sitting on the floor nursing a child to sleep and then having to try to get up with the sleeping child in their arms. Another staff member was observed feeding a child their bottle perched on the corner of the foam cube with the bubble lamp in it.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Chairs have been made available to staff who wish to use them for feeding or to sit and nurse a child. These are stored outside the room door and are available at any time for the staff.
The registered provider will ensure that the chairs are available at any time for the staff if required.

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 been addressed.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions, sensory lighting, and bubble lamps.
- Two separate sleep rooms were available in the service:
Sleep Room 1 located beside the office contained 5 standard cots suitable for children under 2 years of age. Sleep Room 2 was located off the Waddler Room and contained 10 standard cots.
- A number of individual day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were also available.

(3)(a)

- The outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises and off the Baby Room. It had a safety surface that enables use in all weathers. A variety of toys and equipment were available including balance scooters, cars, a wooden climbing frame and pizza swing, tyres and balance beams and a variety of 'push n pull' toys and water shoots. A picnic table and wooden seating was available for the children to sit, and a wooden shed was provided for the storage of toys and equipment.

Non-Compliance Information

1. One child aged 2 years 2 months was observed sleeping in a 'space saving cot' which is only suitable for children up to a maximum age of 18 months.
2. In sleep room 2, two of the cot mattresses were ill-fitting. This is a safety risk as there were footholds present in the cot.
3. In cot room 2, three of the mattresses did not have adequate safety labels.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Actions

1. Cots have been assigned to all the children to ensure they are age appropriate.
All cots are assigned to children and staff are aware which cot to use.
2. A risk assessment has been designed and will be carried out to make sure that all mattresses have correct fitting sheets.
3. New mattresses have been ordered. All mattress will be checked for safety adherence when risk assessments are carried out

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the safety compliance document for the mattresses

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-compliances have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the Baby Room there were sharp unprotected corners on the white shelving in the room.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Edging has been placed on the corners in the Baby room.

Monthly risk assessments will be carried out to make sure that corners are protected from sharp edges at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance has 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) The service had a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid for children available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) &(b)The suitably equipped first aid boxes were safely stored on the premises and inaccessible to the pre-school children.