

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH045
Name of Service:	Knockbridge Childcare
Address of Service:	Newtown, Knockbridge, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Eircode:	A91 RWH2
Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Scanlon
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	04/03/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		

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

Knockbridge Childcare is a privately owned service that has been in operation in this location since 2002. The service provides Sessional care and education to pre-school children aged from 2 to 6 years and operates from Monday – Friday 09:00 to 12:30. The afternoon sessional service from 12:30 -15:30 is currently not in operation. The service is located in a residential area in Knockbridge, outside Dundalk in Co. Louth. The preschool service operates from a purposively developed playroom attached to a domestic dwelling and consists of 1 play room and adjoining sanitary accommodation and a utility area. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area on the premises. There is parking onsite for drop off and collection

Staffing

The registered provider employs 2 staff who work directly with the pre-school children on a daily basis. The registered provider provides relief in the service as required.

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 9,11,19,23 and 25 however, on inspection 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 inspector would like 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, 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) &(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived on the premises and was present throughout the inspection. The registered provider is the deputy person in charge and was present episodically throughout the inspection.

(2) There were 3 staff files 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 3 members of staff including the registered provider.

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

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

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that each member of staff, who works directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications

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.*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) On the day of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 10:40, there were 2 staff members working directly with the 8 pre-school children present, aged between 2 -3 years. The registered provider arrived onto the premises after the inspector and was present episodically throughout the inspection.

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

1. There was no daily staff roster available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

There is now a daily staff roster in place. This roster will be updated weekly

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of staff roster

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 16 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, and

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

Basic Needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis; for example, hands were washed before snack times, after messy play and noses were cleaned during the inspection.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for all children while discreet supervision was also provided to give gentle reminders with hand hygiene. Those children who required assistance with toileting or nappies changed were supported with toileting and changed as necessary. Good interactions were also observed between the staff and the children during nappy changing procedures.
- All children attending the service brought their own lunches from home and these were appropriately stored in the fridge. The staff encouraged the children to tidy up when lunch time was finished. Children who required additional time to eat their lunch were afforded the opportunity and were also provided with assistance as required. The staff were observed to sit with the children at lunch time and engaged in social conversation about food and what everybody had for lunch. They also had a discussion about the local primary school when they heard the noise of the school bell.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner e.g. “would you like some help? Can you manage or would you like me to open it for you...?” Positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff e.g. “*now...where are you going to sit...? good boy you have washed your hands...*”.
- The staff were observed sitting with the children and getting down to the children’s level when engaging in activities with them for example, during messy play at the sand table and during story time.
- Verbal feedback with parents was observed to occur at pick-up times. It was also reported that phone calls are also used in the communication with parents and a messaging service is used to send photographs of activities in the service. The registered provider stated that newsletters are sent home to inform parents of upcoming events such as Easter activities and graduation information. Documentary journals are also used and sent home every 1-2 weeks with details of the children’s activities.

Physical and material environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service. A rest area was available, which included a play mat with soft cushions, so the children could take a break from an activity or sit and read a book if they choose to.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment. The equipment was suited to the ages and stages of development of the children present and also promoted many areas of child development. The equipment was arranged and displayed on low level open shelving which facilitated the children to select and replace their chosen toys of interest.
- Specific areas of interest were developed in the playroom that support a variety of types of play and help children to see and experience the choices on offer. For example; the book corner, the train table, the home corner, sand and water area and the dress up area. Each area was adequately resourced with age-appropriate equipment.
- The children had a change of environment to the outdoor area. They were observed to engage in a variety of activities that promoted many areas of development including gross motor, balance and coordination. For example, the children were observed to climb on slides, ride on the trikes and cars, play running games and play with the musical wall.

Programme of activities and its implementation

- A daily routine was on display in the playroom which included a photographic and written routine. The staff reported that curriculum was based on the children’s continuous emerging interests. Ongoing observations were documented for each child.
- The children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. While children were supported to play together, equally children who wished to play alone were also supported.
- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in the playroom which was reflective of the planned curriculum theme “under the sea” e.g. fish and water, glitter star fish.

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 was 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:

1. There was not a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water in the service. In the sanitary area the water in the hot water tap was cold when nappy changes were being carried out.
2. One staff member observed carrying out nappy changes did not wash their hands between children's nappy changes. It is acknowledged that gloves were used and changed between uses, however the staff members hands were not washed.
3. The changing mat in use in the nappy changing area was not wiped down between use as per best practice guidelines.
4. It was observed that the staff member carrying out nappy changes placed the cumulative 4 soiled nappies together on top of the toilet cistern, rather than disposing of the individual soiled nappies in a leak proof, cleanable and sealable container.

General Safety

5. In the outdoor area, that was accessed by the children, a plastic climbing frame was positioned on a decked area with the end of the slide located up against a concrete post. This is a potential safety risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider engaged a plumber who checked and adjusted water thermostat controls. The staff will monitor the hot water supply and keep in contact with plumber and have him re check regularly.

In-house training was given to this member of staff. The registered provider will spot check this staff member regularly to ensure that the nappy changing procedures are being followed. The staff will be observed to ensure that hands are washed between nappy changes, that the nappy changing mat is wiped down and that used nappies are bagged separately and disposed of in bin.

Staff training was provided, and room leader and assistant is responsible for setting up and maintaining the position of the slide. they are responsible for setting up area and ensuring slide is in the recommended manufacture instructions. Checks of the position of the slide will take place. I have reviewed the manufacture safety instructions.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the repositioned slide and a copy of the manufacturer's instruction sheet.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances, together with photographic evidence. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed 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

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for one adult in the service.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes available in each of the care rooms and were stored in a conspicuous location where they were easily accessible in the event of an emergency.