

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH081
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Name of Service:	Redeemer Creche & Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Ashling Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 D296
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mandy Stevenson
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date 1 of Inspection:	13/03/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	14/03/2024
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No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	46	PM	25
Day 2	AM	40	PM	No.

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	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

The Redeemer Crèche and Playgroup is a community-based service, managed by a voluntary committee and in operation since 1991. The service provides Full day care, Part- time and Sessional care to Pre-school children aged 6 months to 6 years. The maximum number of children that be accommodated is 68 and the service operates from 8.00am – 5pm.

The service operates from a purpose-built childcare facility within a residential area of Dundalk town. There is off street parking available for parental drop off and collection. There are 5 care rooms in operation namely The Baby Room, the Waddler Room, The Toddler Room and the Playgroup Rooms 1 &2. Ancillary accommodation consists of 2 dedicated sleep rooms off the Baby Room and Waddler Room, sanitary facilities, storage areas, a kitchen, a reception area and office space. The children have access to 2 separate outdoor play areas on the premises

Staffing

There were 25 staff working in the service. Fourteen staff were employed to work directly with the preschool children, and which included the service manager, four staff including the registered provider who were engaged in administrative duties, 3 staff members who were employed under a community employment scheme and four students who attended the service on a 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 9,11,16,20,21, 23 and 31; however, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 days 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. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) Twenty-five staff files were reviewed which included the registered provider, 3 administration staff, 3 staff engaged on a community employment scheme, 14 childcare staff including the service manager and 4 students:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 22 members of staff and 3 students.

There was 1 written and validated reference for 2 staff members and 1 student and each of these had a second written reference.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all members of staff and students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

- (d) International police vetting was available for 3 out of 5 members of staff who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 14 adults who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) and (b) Two staff and 1 student did not have 1 of their written references validated.
- (d) Two adults who resided outside the Irish jurisdiction as an adult did not have acceptable evidence of a processed international police vetting available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a) and (b) The registered provider has thoroughly reviewed all the staff files and made sure that all the references that were previously un-verified have been validated.
- (d) International police vetting was received from both adults.
- All new employees must provide international police vetting, and files will be regularly checked for accuracy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of two international police vetting documents submitted.

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 under Regulation 9 have 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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the days of inspection there were 5 rooms in operation namely the Baby and Waddler Rooms located on the ground Floor and The Toddler Room and Playgroup Rooms 1 & 2 located on the first floor.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspectors arrived unannounced to the service;

On day 1 of Inspection 13/03/2024

- **The Baby Room:**

There was 1 preschool child aged 1 year with 1 member of staff.

- **The Waddler Room:**

There were 5 preschool children aged 2 - 3 years cared for by 2 members of staff.

- **The Toddler Room:**

There were 12 children aged 2 - 3 years with 2 members of staff and 1 adult who was engaged in a community employment scheme.

- **Playgroup 1 Room**

There were 15 preschool children aged 3 - 5 years with 3 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

- **Playgroup 2 Room**

There were 13 children aged 4 - 5 years with 3 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

On day 2 of Inspection 14/03/2024

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- **The Baby Room:**

There was 1 preschool child aged 1 year with 1 member of staff.

- **The Waddler Room:**

There were 5 children aged 2 – 3 years cared for by 1 member of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

- **The Toddler Room:**

There were 10 children aged 2 - 3 years with 2 members of staff and 1 adult who was engaged in a community employment scheme.

- **Playgroup 1 Room**

There were 11 children aged 3 - 5 years with 2 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

- **Playgroup 2 Room**

There were 13 children aged 3 - 5 years with 3 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

The child adult ratios were correct.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured 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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Documentary evidence was available of the daily attendance of each child in the service and included the arrival and departure times of each child.
- (i) Up to date daily/ weekly staff rosters were available in the service and were reflective of the staff present in the service.
- (j) In the Toddler Room and Playgroup 1 Room the administration of medication records reviewed were complete and detailed the medication administered to a child including, the time, the dose, a second staff signature and parental signature to confirm that they were informed that the medication had been administered. Parental consent was also detailed.
- (k) Documentary evidence was available of accidents and incidents involving a preschool child that occurred in the Toddler Room and Playgroup 1 room. All documented incidents reviewed were complete and were also signed by the child's parents indicating that had been informed about the incident.

Non-Compliance Information

- (j) Some administration of medication forms reviewed in the Waddler Room and Playgroup 2 Room were incomplete for example, some had no second staff signature, parental signature to indicate they had been informed the medication had been given and a parental consent form not fully completed. This is also at variance with the Administration of Medication policy.
- (k) Some accident /incident forms which were reviewed in Playgroup 2 room and in the Waddler Room were not always fully completed for example some were not signed by the parents and 1 did not have a manager signature.

In addition, on Day 1 of inspection a child who had fallen of their chair did not have an accident form completed for this incident. It is acknowledged that staff did confirm on Day 2 that the parent had been verbally informed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(i) Each staff member was given the new medicine policy and informed of the procedure for filling out accident forms.

(j) Staff were reminded of the importance of completing all accident forms, which will be monitored and checked regularly by the manager.

The medicine policy has been reviewed, updated, and distributed to all staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of Copy of medication management policy and procedure submitted.

Photographic evidence of handwritten accident/incident form submitted.

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 16 have 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,

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service in relation to the following:

(1)(a)

1. The environment in Playgroup Room 1 was chaotic at times during the afternoon session particularly during transition periods for example, one child was observed walking around the room, lying on the ground for periods of time, throwing food on the floor and on occasions throwing toys around the room. A staff member was observed at this stage to try and unsuccessfully lift the child up off the floor by their arms. During this time while this staff member was trying to deal with these incidents a 2nd staff member was trying to put out lunches and stop some of the children climbing on the tables and worktops at the same time.
2. A number of children in Playgroup Room, needed additional support from the staff members to facilitate their participation in the service. Individualised care plans, which were developed with the support of an external agency were in place for the children with identified goals and actions to support development. However, there was no evidence of recent planning by the staff in the care room to implement strategies and supports to achieve these goals e.g., when questioned one staff member was not familiar with the strategies detailed on the plans and a second staff member who was familiar with some of the strategies stated that they had not recently reviewed the care plans or completed any planning to implement supports even though some of the goals had been identified since February 2023. In addition, staff also reported that they had not been updated in relation to these care plans.
3. Some of the language used during the afternoon session in Playgroup 1 was not supportive in helping children who were stressed to self-regulate their behaviour for example one staff member was heard saying *“Oh God what is gonna get now”*. A second staff member was observed standing at the toilet door saying *“bye bye ...your messing now”* as the child lay on the toilet floor and *“sure I told mam that... didn't like that”* after the child was observed to throw their lunch on the floor.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A meeting was held with the staff on April 15, 2024. To provide additional support, a CE staff member was assigned to the room. The manager is currently assisting the staff in the room daily until a new full-time member of staff is recruited. An interview was conducted on April 17, 2024, to select a suitable candidate for a position in the room.
2. The goals were discussed, and measures were put in place to facilitate a child in this room with additional needs.

3. Discussion took place with staff who were advised about their use of language. A new policy will be implemented regarding the use of language when communicating with children. The current staff will closely monitor and support the children in this room. The registered provider is also seeking additional staff to support them. A meeting was held with an external agency on April 23, 2024 to gain their support. A visit is scheduled two weeks from now for the service to be advised on improvements and strategies for moving forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the various policies and procedures and an individualised care plan submitted.

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 under Regulation 19 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed 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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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 foam mats and cushions.
- Two separate sleep rooms located on the ground floor were available in the service:
Sleep Room 1 is located off the Baby Room and contained 5 standard cots suitable for children under 2 years of age. Sleep Room 2 was located off the Waddler Room and contained 4 standard cots.
- A number of individual day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were also available.

(3) The children from each care room had the opportunity for outdoor play during the inspection. There are 2 separate outdoor areas:

- **Area 1:** Is located off the Waddler Room on the ground floor. The area is walled, gated, and fenced and has a variety of surfaces including grass, safety matting and concrete steps. Staff reported that the grass area is currently not in use. A variety of play equipment is available including tyres, plastic bridge for climbing, a blackboard wall, a mud kitchen, planted boxes and a storage shed in the area which contained toys and equipment.
- **Areas 2:** Is located off Playgroup Room 2 on the first floor. This roof top play area is walled and secured and has a safety surface. A variety of play equipment that promoted many areas of development were available including; a blackboard wall, balance and climbing beams, tyres for rolling and a storage shed for additional equipment such as bikes, scooters, a slide and footballs.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were instances where sleep facilities were found to be inadequate as demonstrated by the following:

1. In the sleep room off the Waddler Room, 2 of the cot mattresses were stained and required cleaning.
2. The other 2 cot mattresses were ill-fitting, and footholds were present, which is a potential safety hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. Cots were removed from the room. Three new cots with new mattresses were purchased, existing mattresses replaced on the other cots.
2. New protectors for all existing cots were purchased.

All cots will be checked daily, and mattresses will be inspected for any issues. A log-sheet was created to ensure records are kept of cots and mattresses been inspected on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary of proof of purchase of new cots and mattresses submitted.

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 20 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- In each of the care rooms there were 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 play equipment was stored on low level open shelving which was accessible to the children.
- In the playrooms the toys and equipment available was divided into specific areas of interest including sensory play areas which included sand and water trays, shredded coloured paper, coloured pasta and rice and chia seed slime. There were also dress up areas, a home area with dolls and supporting play equipment, a construction area and an art gallery. Low level open shelving units contained a variety of manipulative and fine motor toys and equipment such as; a variety of blocks, jigsaws, interconnecting toys, animals and other small world toys. A rest and reading area with a variety of books, soft seats and mats were also available in each room. Staff reported that additional toys and equipment were available for rotation out to the rooms.

- Evidence of the children's artwork was on display in each of the rooms which included; shamrocks, jellyfish, butterflies, pots of gold, and a variety of animals such as pigs, sheep and cows.

Non-Compliance Information

The following pieces of furniture and play equipment were unsuitable:

1. Of the 6 wooden jigsaws on the shelf in the Playgroup Room 2, 3 had pieces missing.
2. Some of the books in Playgroup 2 were tattered and torn.
3. Some of the shelving units throughout the service were chipped and in a state of disrepair.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All incomplete jigsaw puzzles have been removed and replaced with new ones.
2. New books and jigsaw puzzles have been purchased and arranged in various rooms.
3. New play kitchens have been ordered for both ECCE rooms, and new furniture is being sought for all rooms. This process will continue over the next few months to replace all existing units.

Toys and items in the rooms will be checked on a regular basis and replaced where necessary.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of proof of purchase for new jigsaws and books plus play kitchens submitted.

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 under Regulation 21 have been addressed.

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.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments were evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or inaccessible to the children.
- Sharp corners that were exposed on the low lever windowsills in the outdoor area were padded with a protective foam to reduce the potential injury risk to the children.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in the service to support hand washing.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Fridges in the rooms were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.
- The service has a procedure in place for the appropriate storage of soothers. Staff were familiar with the process and detailed that all soothers are stored in individual, labelled containers.
- Mouthed toy boxes were available in the care rooms and were observed in use for the removal of toys used by the children.

Safe Sleep

- All children under 2 years of age have access to a standard cot on a daily basis.
- Ten-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were observed being carried out on all sleeping children.
- The temperature in the sleep room in the Waddler Room was monitored and recorded on a daily basis and was maintained between 16 - 20°C.

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:

Safe Sleep:

1. In the Waddler and Toddler rooms some of the safe sleep records reviewed did not include the actual written details of each 10-minute physical observation instead a " symbol was used rather than documenting the actual observation made.
2. In the Waddler Room at 3.09pm it was observed that the sleep room temperature written record had been prepopulated for the rest of the day with hourly temperatures recorded for 3.30pm and 4.30pm.

General Safety:

3. Sharp unprotected corners were observed on some of the low-level shelving units in the care rooms. For example, on the white shelving units in Playgroup rooms 1 and 2 and Waddler rooms plus the worktop area in Playgroup 2 Room.
4. In Playgroup 2 the CD player was unsecured and a potential impact hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

Safe Sleep:

1. It was communicated to the staff that using symbols instead of completing written documentation is not acceptable. All staff were informed of this policy.
2. During the staff meeting, management reminded everyone that pre-populated temperatures are not allowed and will be monitored regularly.

General Safety:

3. In Playgroups 1 and 2, all sharp corners and edges were covered with foam for safety. Foam protectors were also placed on the sink unit in both Playgroups. The registered provider checked all the rooms for sharp edges and covered them with foam for added protection. Units are being replaced in all rooms over the coming weeks.
4. The CD player was removed from the room immediately.

On 24/4/23, a meeting was held with all staff to discuss areas that required attention. It was emphasized that all staff should ensure that records are kept correctly going forward.

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 under Regulation 23 have been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;*
- (b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Compliance Information

The Early Years Inspectorate was notified of incidents in the service in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 31. Documentary evidence was available of the measures taken in the service to prevent another incident occurring which all staff when questioned were familiar with.