

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH112		
Name of Service:	Woddlers & Toddlers		
Address of Service:	Knocknagoran, Omeath, Co. Louth		
Eircode:	A91 FK03		
Name of Registered Provider:	Irene Moley		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	01/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM 28
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

Woddlers & Toddlers has been operating as a privately owned childcare service in this setting since 2002. The early years' service is registered to cater for a maximum of 50 children. It provides full day care, part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 0-6 years and operates from 07:30am to 6.00pm each weekday. The service operates from a purpose-built premises in a rural area of Omeath, Co. Louth. There are currently 3 care rooms in operation on the premises namely; The Baby Room and The Woddler Room which are located on the first floor and the Pre-school Room which is located on the ground floor. Ancillary accommodation consists of a separate sleep room, sanitary areas, a kitchen, an office, and storage areas. The children also have access to a developed outdoor play area to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

There were 20 staff employed in the service including the following:

- Sixteen childcare staff who work directly with the children, which includes the registered provider and staff who provide relief in the service and also work in the sister service.
- Two additional staff members are employed to carry out catering, cleaning, and caretaking duties.
- Two staff are involved in the school aged service.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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, 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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)&(b) The service had a person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. Both persons were on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

(2) Following a discussion with the registered provider and a review of the staff roster and attendance record, the following staff files were available and reviewed:

(a)&(b) Two written and validated references were available for 20 staff members including the registered provider:

(a) Twenty-seven written references were from a past employer.

(b) Thirteen written references were from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for each of the staff members in the service including the registered provider.

(d) Documentary evidence of processed international police vetting was not required at this time as following a review of the staff files no member of staff has resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months.

(4) Fifteen staff members who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required qualification in childcare.

(6)(a) and (b) Documentary evidence was available of to confirm that one adult who was observed working directly with the preschool children was working under the extended grandfathering clause.

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 children attending the service.

(2) On the day of inspection when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10.35am there were three rooms in operation:

The Pre-school Room: There were 17 preschool children aged 3-5 years present. Twelve children were in the preschool room with 2 staff members and 5 children were in the outdoor area with 1 staff member.

The Baby Room: There were 5 preschool children aged 11 months – 1 year and 9 months present with 2 staff members.

The Woddler Room: There were 12 preschool children present in this room, aged 1 year and 9 months – 3 years. Four were inside in the care room with 1 staff member and 8 children present in the designated outdoor area with 2 staff members. One additional adult arrived on the premises to assist in this care room and was the floater for the service.

Two additional adults were present in the service at this time including the registered provider and one adult who was engaged in cleaning duties.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records this 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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor.

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Documentary evidence was available including, staff files and information on display that detailed the name, position, qualification, and experience of all staff employed in the service including the registered provider.

(h) The arrival and departure times of the children attending the service were documented on a daily basis.

(i) A weekly staff roster and documentary evidence of the arrival and departure times of the staff present in the service on a daily basis was available for inspection.

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

Compliance Information

There were 3 care rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely; The Baby Room, The Woddler Room and The Preschool Room.

(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 as was evidenced by the dinner and snacks provided by the service in the various rooms. Independence with feeding was promoted and staff provided support to the younger children and babies.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children the various rooms after toileting.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- Tissues were available in all the rooms and attention was given to personal care such as nose blowing, and cleaning faces.
- With the exception of the non-compliance below child led sleep needs were facilitated in the Baby and Woddler Rooms. The staff followed the children's routines and also were alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping at various intervals in the cot room. The children attending the Preschool Room were facilitated to sleep on the day beds when it was converted to a sleep room at the allocated sleep time.
- The children were observed to move freely in the care rooms and also had a change of environment to the outdoor areas on a number of occasions.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in all areas such as *"oh look at that ...you did it all by yourself... well done "* *" your so kind"* *"we have to be careful we don't bump into our friends."*
- Enthusiastic conversations were observed between the children and the staff at various times. Throughout the service the staff were obviously familiar with the children and their families as they were heard discussing family activities, grandparents, siblings and holidays.
- In the Baby Room staff were observed constantly talking with the babies and letting the children know what they were going to do such as *" we are going to wash our hands now and is going to wash hers too."*

- Parents were communicated with at drop off and collection and details of the child's day were briefly discussed. The staff reported that telephone calls, and social media are also used to share information about upcoming activities/ events and to discuss any care related issues. Each care room have their own group messaging service set up. Scrap books were available for each child and contained a variety of photographs, artwork and observations which were compiled throughout the year and sent home as a 'keepsake' for the children and parents.

Physical and Material Environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service.
- Highchairs were used appropriately in the Baby room for feeding.
- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment were available in each of the care rooms that support many areas of development such as fine motor and gross motor skills, role play, speech and language and sensory development.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in all rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. The toys were stored in clear boxes that were also labelled so that the children could identify the toys contained within and then select their chosen toy of interest.

Programme Of Activities

- A variety of activities that promoted the children's language development were observed throughout the service which included including storytelling, the singing of songs and social conversation between the staff and children and the children together.
- A variety of the children's artwork was on display throughout the service and included: smudge painting, "mosaic" art, "5 things that make me happy", "when I grow up, I want to be..." "flip flopping into summer" and ice-creams, handprint fish, footprint painting and free art.

Non-Compliance Information

In the Baby room, one child who was upset and displaying obvious signs of tiredness was not put down for a sleep so they could wait up to have their dinner. There was a delay in the dinner coming and then it had to be cooled which was acknowledged by the staff member "*I know... we are just waiting.*" The child was offered their yoghurt drink while waiting and the staff member did lift the child out of their chair, gave them their soother and nursed the child until the dinner was cooled. The child was put down to sleep by 12:45 after their dinner.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Child led sleep needs are facilitated when the child show signs of tiredness.

All staff are more aware of children displaying signs of tiredness and are following the child's lead.

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 remedial actions have been taken to achieve regulatory compliance. Implementation and sustainment 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-

(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

(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)(a)

- There were soft comfortable areas in the rooms which consisted of mats, small sofa and cushions which a child could sit and relax on or take a break from an activity. There was an adult chair in the Baby Room where an adult could sit and nurse and baby or small child.
- There was a recently developed sleep room located on the ground floor and which contained 8 standard cots. Additionally, there were an adequate number of daybeds for the children aged over 2 years of age to sleep on.

(3) The outdoor play area was located to the side and rear of the premises and was divided into 3 outdoor 'classrooms' and play areas. The three areas were subdivided by fencing into three separate sections which are partially covered. Each area has a wall mounted heater, and a portable air-cooling unit.

A variety of surface areas are available including wooden decking, artificial grass, and concrete paths. Each of the three areas have some defined areas of interest with a wide variety of supporting equipment including a home corner, a construction/ digging area, a musical wall, a soft resting/ reading area and an art area. Additional toys available also include ride-on and push along toys, plastic toys such as trains, cars and trucks, blackboards, large trays with water and toys and a variety of wooden and plastic blocks.

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

- The Baby Room was well resourced with a variety of toys. Furniture was size appropriate for the different age ranges attending the room. There were 3 pull up rails and a ball pit. There was low level shelving with interactive toys, wooden blocks, rattly toys, soft toys, small world figures and animals, sensory bottles, jigsaws, and a sand tray was also available. Additionally, there were soft matted areas for the children to relax in and foam shaped cushion for climbing on. The 2 highchairs in the Baby room were clean and in good condition and both had safety harnesses. There was a comfortable adult chair in the Baby room for an adult to sit comfortably and nurse or feed a child.
- The Woddler Room was a well-resourced room with different defined areas, such as, a cosy area with matting, cushions and a canopy, the kitchen area well resourced, dolls, equipment and dolls clothing, a music area, construction area with various blocks a garage and cars, 2 rocking unicorns, a large ball pit and various tabletop activities such as stickle blocks and wooden jigsaws set up on the tables.
- The Preschool Room was a well-resourced room with a number of defined interest areas. Each area was supported with a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys and equipment e.g., a home corner that included a kitchen with real world play materials, dolls with clothing and buggies, a relax area which was partially enclosed and included soft mats, cushions, sensory baskets, and sensory pads with different textures. An elevated loft area was available and contained a variety of books, soft cushions, and sensory lighting. Other areas of interest included a construction area, a creative area and role play area each containing a variety of age-appropriate play materials and equipment.

A variety of manipulative toys including wooden jigsaws, blocks, connectors, animals, trains, and tracks were also available and were positioned on low level accessible shelving which facilitated the children to select and make their own choices.

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

Healthy eating is promoted in the service and there is a menu on display. All hot meals are provided by an external catering company and reheated by the service. On the day of the inspection the lunch time dinner provided at 1.30pm was observed to consist of broccoli bake with mash potato and gravy. Breakfast was reported to consist of breakfast cereal and was also provided by the service. Some children bring in their own snacks and these were stored appropriately in the service. One child who didn't eat the service dinner was given sausages. Potable drinking water was available for the children to access as required in all rooms and in the Baby /Toddler Room the staff reported that any bottles of formula milk are brought in by the parents made-up.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- 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 in all of the rooms.

Infection Control:

- There were individual lidded storage boxes for the storage of the children’s soothers in the Baby and Woddler rooms.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and sole use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Staff were able to verbalise correct cleaning processes for toys and equipment.
- The nappy changing mat was in good repair in both nappy changing areas and cleaning sprays were available to clean the mats and areas after use.
- There were individual lidded containers for the soothers in the Baby Room.
- In the Baby room staff who cleaned children’s noses were observed to wash both the child’s and their own hands after the procedure.
- In the Woddler room mouthed toys were observed to be removed from use and put in sink for washing.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out 10-minute physical safe sleep observations in accordance with the services safe sleep policy and a written sleep log was kept while children were sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate was not assured that adequate steps had been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service for the following reasons:

General Safety:

- On the day of the inspection, it was a very hot and sunny day. A number of children who were in the outdoor area for prolonged periods of time did not have a sunhat on and one child did not have suncream applied. This is at variance with the services “Sun Protection Policy.” Additionally, when questioned one staff member was not aware of the policy being available.

Infection Control

The following cross infection risks were observed:

- During a nappy changing procedure one staff member was observed wearing the ‘used’ gloves to clean down the mat after the procedure and also to lift the lid of the bin to dispose of the soiled nappy. In addition, the gloves worn by the staff member were oversized.

- The sole use paper hand towels used by the staff and children in the service were not hygienically dispensed from a paper towel dispenser and were observed as large rolls of paper towels sitting on top of the nappy changing area or shelving units. This practice is a cross-contamination risk.

Safe Sleep:

The following elevated sleep room temperatures were recorded:

At 12.50pm the room temperature in the preschool room when it was converted to a sleep area was recorded at 22.1 °C.

At 11.45am the room temperature in the cot room was recorded at 21.8 °C.

These temperatures are above the safe sleep guidelines of a sleep room temperature of 16 – 20 °C. It is acknowledged that staff had opened the windows in the rooms.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Messages have been issued to all parents/guardians regarding sun hats/suncream. Parents/guardians will be informed during the parent's information evening of the importance of appropriate clothing for children for the different seasons. The sun protection policy has been communicated to all staff members. All staff will continue to be trained in all the policies and procedures to ensure they are implemented where appropriate.

Infection Control:

- The nappy changing policy has been communicated to all staff members. Smaller gloves have been purchased.
- All new paper towel dispensers have been installed in each room including nappy changing room and toilets.

Safe Sleep:

- Room temperatures will continue to be monitored.
- Air conditioning units are now available for use when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of documented sleep room temperatures and risk assessments.

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 remedial actions have been taken to achieve regulatory compliance. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next inspection.