

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK030
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Name of Service:	Busy Kids Creche
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Address of Service:	Ennis Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 KC7K
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Moore
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Service type:	Full Day Care
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Date 1 of Inspection:	07/02/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	09/02/2024
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No of pre-school children Day 1	AM	126	PM	93
Day 2	AM	114	PM	90

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Description of service

Busy Kids is a privately owned full day care service located in the outskirts of Limerick City.

It offers a service to children of all pre-school ages. It also provides a service each afternoon to school aged children. It operates Monday to Friday 7.30 to 18.30pm.

The service operates from a purposely built premises. It has a large front entrance lobby and a spacious foyer which has a dining area located in the centre. It has a manager's office, a kitchen, a Baby room, a Wobbler room, 3 Toddler room, and 4 Preschool rooms. It also has 2 designated sleep rooms. There are 5 outdoor play areas, 2 at the front of the premises and the 3 at the rear of the building. Children spend long periods in the outside play areas throughout the day.

Staffing

The registered provider of the service is the regional manager of the Sonas Childcare Company. In Busy Kids there is a manager and a deputy manager on duty at all times. A regional co ordinator also assists in the management of the service. All staff working at the facility hold an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff participate in ongoing training and professional development.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11 19, 20, 23, 27 and 29.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the people 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
 (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
 (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff employed to work at the service. All vetting was completed in the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was available for any staff member who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

(7) All staff were supervised and trained where necessary on

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services Regulations 2016)

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the 7th of February there were 126 pre-school children and 27 adults on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

(2) There were 12 preschool children and 3 staff in the Baby Room

There were 13 preschool children and 3 staff in the Wobbler Room

There were 12 preschool children and 2 staff in Toddler Room 1

There were 14 preschool children and 3 staff in Toddler Room 2

There were 9 preschool children and 2 staff in Toddler Room 3

There were 11 preschool children and 3 staff in ECCE Room 1(Outdoor Cabin)

There were 17 preschool children and 3 staff in ECCE Room 2

There were 17 preschool children and 3 staff in ECCE Room 3

There were 19 preschool children and 3 staff in ECCE Room 4

Relief staff were available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to the dining room and to other individual rooms in the service.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh on site each day and were served at regular intervals to the children in the dining area and in some of the individual room. Highchairs were used for babies at mealtimes. Older children downstairs used the dining area in the front foyer for mealtimes. On the day of the inspection spaghetti bolognese was served for dinner. Staff were observed supervising mealtimes and assisting children who needed help. The atmosphere during dining was relaxed and mealtimes were not rushed.

Sanitary accommodation was located next to each room in the service. Nappy changing facilities were provided next to the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Easily accessible waist high changing units were available in these areas. Sanitary accommodation for the older children was located next to each of the pre-school rooms. A change of clothes was available for all children. Outdoor rain gear and suitable footwear was available to ensure children got outdoors in all weathers.

There was a separate sleep room available with a sufficient number of standard cots accessible at all times to the children in the Baby and Wobbler rooms. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all sleep checks were documented digitally. Room temperatures were monitored and air conditioning units were used to ensure safe room temperatures while sleeping. The toddlers over 2 years who required a sleep had access to low level beds. Each child had access to their own bed linen. Staff stayed with the older children during their rest time. Relaxation areas with mattresses and blankets were accessible throughout the day in each of the rooms accommodating the older children at the service. These areas provided cosy spaces for children to relax in and take time out and away from active play spaces if they were tired.

The children had regular change of environment. They spend long periods of time outdoors in a well-resourced play area to the front, back and side of the premises. A large, sheltered area outdoors was provided outside for children to use in all weather conditions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Each room in the service was designed and equipment was laid out to meet the individual needs of the various age groups. The Baby and Wobbler rooms had lots of soft floor mats to provide comfort for the children crawling and to facilitate many floor-based activities. Black out tents provided hiding areas for children to play in. Comfortable adult seating was accessible in each room. Toys and equipment were stored on low level open shelving, making it easy for children to independently choose their choice of materials to engage with.

In the Pre-school and ECCE rooms there were numerous well developed interest areas, building and construction play spaces, art and craft facilities with art easels, paint pots and brushes accessible, messy play areas with sand, water and pasta play, imaginative play areas with home corners accessible, dress up clothes and mirrors. All rooms had reading areas with a good variety of reading material. There was an emphasis in each room on the use of natural, open ended play materials. Toys and equipment were rotated, and internal and external spaces redesigned depending on each child's preferences, interests and abilities. A sensory room was available on the first floor of the premises. This area provided a quiet relaxation area with lots of soft lighting, comfortable seating and soothing music. Plans were in place to revise the layout of this room making it a calmer, quieter area.

Children were encouraged to spend long periods outside. Tunnels, climbing frames, playhouses, slides, swings, ride on toys, rockers and basketball nets, art easels and blackboards were accessible outside. A large, covered area outside provided shelter for the children in all weather conditions. Gardening areas with places to dig, shovel and plant were available. Bug hotels and mud kitchens extended the creative play experiences outside.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) A sufficient number of standard cots were provided in the Baby and the Wobbler sleep rooms at the service. All cots were in a proper state of repair and all mattresses appeared clean, firm and the correct size. There was sufficient space between all cots. Staff were all aware of the safe sleep guidelines and were observed closely monitoring all children while sleeping. No duvets, pillows or fleece blankets were used in the cots. All children were facilitated to sleep when tired and not just at prescheduled sleep times.

Air conditioning units were available in both cots rooms and this allowed room temperatures to be controlled between 17 and 20 degrees Celsius. The children over 2 years were allowed sleep on sleep mats in their own rooms. Blinds were pulled and staff sat with the children while they settled down to sleep.

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 services Health and Safety Statement was displayed at the main entrance to the premises. A Health and Safety Officer was appointed to carry out risk assessments on a regular basis in both the internal and the external environment of the service.

On inspection the following was observed:

- All external doors were appropriately secured with a magnetic lock to prevent children accessing unsafe areas or allowing unsupervised access to the building.
- All emergency exits and fire doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Windows on the first floor all had restrictive opening devices fitted.
- Suitable handrails were provided on the staircase.
- All highchairs were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

A detailed supervision policy was in place at the service which outlined the responsibility of all staff to ensure children are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

Preschool children from the first floor did not have access to toilet facilities close to the outdoor area at the rear of the premises. The children used a bathroom on the ground floor where staff could not supervise them by sight or by sound. Children must always be within sight of staff or within communication distance if out of sight for a short period for example when using the bathroom. Staff must accompany children to the bathroom in all other instances.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service immediately reviewed access to toilet facilities for pre-school children when playing outside. Children now use the toilets in the Toddlers room, as this allows them to always remain supervised. Children can no longer use the toilet at the front of the building when using the outdoor play areas.

The service owners are exploring options to create toilet facilities directly inside the back door and are engaged with a contractor to assess feasibility of this option.

There is a staff member now stationed near the back door when a child is going to the bathroom, to maintain supervision. Staff have been given walkie-talkies to maintain contact with each other while supervising children in different areas. Staff have all been retrained on the Supervision Policy and effective supervision practices at the latest staff meeting.

The services management will conduct regular checks to ensure staff are adhering to the guidelines and that children are safe during bathroom breaks.

Supporting documentation submitted

The measures taken to address the noncompliance were outlined in the corrective and preventative action plan.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions taken by the service. The non-compliance under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service appeared of sound and stable structure. No obvious defects were observed on the premises.
- (b) All entrance and exit points appeared well secured. A buzzer system was used to gain access to the building. All visitors were requested to sign in, on arrival to the service. For staff leaving the service a fingerprint scan was required to open the door.
- (c) Adequate natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting was available in all areas of the service. Air conditioning was provided in all rooms of the building and in each sleep room.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were provided throughout the building.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) It was noted on inspection that the mechanical ventilation in the upstairs toddler nappy changing area was not working.
- (d) The floor covering throughout the building required maintenance with lots of discoloured areas notes along the room and corridor wall edges.
- (e) The nappy changing unit on the first floor did not have steps for children to use to safely access the unit. Access to this area for staff and children was restricted due to wall mounted urinals located next to the unit. Childrens privacy could not be guaranteed in this area of the service.
The nappy changing unit in the Cabin room was located in the lobby outside the children's toilets. Childrens privacy could not be guaranteed in this area of the facility.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The service engaged a qualified electrician to repair the ventilation system in the upstairs toddler nappy changing area. They have implemented a regular maintenance schedule for all ventilation systems in the facility and will conduct routine checks to identify and address any issues promptly before they escalate.

(d) The service conducted a thorough inspection of all floor coverings in the building to identify discoloured areas and have engaged professional services to clean and re wax the discoloured sections as necessary.

They have implemented a more rigorous cleaning schedule, especially focusing on areas prone to discolouration. Staff will be trained on proper cleaning techniques and use of appropriate cleaning agents and the internal cleaner has implemented a new schedule to ensure more regular floor buffing of high traffic areas in the creche.

(e) The service have bought steps for the children to access the nappy changing unit on the first floor. They have obtained quotes to get the urinals removed from the area, to eliminate restriction of access. They have put up a temporary divider in the upstairs change area so that privacy can be guaranteed for children having nappy changes. They have installed a permanent curtain in the upstairs change area once the urinals are removed to section off the area, resulting in guaranteed privacy for the children having nappy changes.

In the Cabin, they have reminded staff to lock the door that leads to the change area to ensure privacy for children having nappy changes. The door at the rear of the cabin is the only door to be used for daily entry and exit. There are 2 doors for emergency exits. The service now conducts monthly audits of the change areas to ensure they are compliant, and children have safe access to the areas, and safe steps to climb on and of the nappy change tables.

The service will sporadically audit staff practices to ensure they are maintaining children's privacy at nappy change times. Staff will be provided with regular training on child privacy protocols and best practices so to ensure staff understand the importance of maintaining children's privacy in sensitive areas of the facility.

The service will conduct a bi-annual review of the facility layout to identify and address any potential privacy concerns. Staff will be involved in the review process to gather insights and suggestions for improvement.

Supporting documentation submitted

Details of the corrective and preventative actions were clearly outlined in the corrective and preventative action plan.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the corrective actions taken by the service and are satisfied that the non-compliance under Regulation 29 has been adequately addressed.