

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LK075

Name of Service: Future Heroes Childcare

Address of Service: The Mews, Ballinacurra House, Ballinacurra, Co. Limerick

Eircode: V94 E429

Name of Registered Provider: Laura Fitzgerald

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 28/02/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	40	PM	17

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office,
2nd Floor 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 Click or tap here to enter text.

Description of service

Future Heroes is a privately owned, full day care pre-school located close to the centre of Limerick City. There are presently 44 preschool children registered to attend the service. The facility is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm. A morning sessional service operates from 9.00 am to 12.00md. A school aged childcare facility is offered each afternoon. The facility operates from 2 pre-school rooms, the Caterpillar room and the Butterfly room. An outdoor play area is located next to the Butterfly room.

Staffing

The facility is owned and run by 2 directors who are the registered providers of the service. Both work full time at the pre-school. There are 9 additional staff members employed at the service. All staff working at the facility have an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. There is a staff present who has completed the LINC training programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in early childhood care and education settings. There are 4 staff members employed through the Access and Inclusion model.

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 inspection 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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) On the day of the inspection the registered providers were the designated people in charge of operating the service and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if needed.

(b) During the period of the inspection, both registered providers were present on the premises. The staff roster indicated that one of the two registered providers were always available on site.

All staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted,

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for all staff employed by the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from reputable sources available.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff employed at the service.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the staff members at the service.

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

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 day of the inspection there were 40 pre-school children and 8 adults on the premises for the morning sessional service. In the afternoon there were 17 pre-school children present. The adult/child ratio in all areas was correct.

(2) At all times the written staff roster showed that the registered providers ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in all areas of the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*

- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 20 children's enrolment forms were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service.
- (d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- (h) Record of immunisations received by the child.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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) The management at the service ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility. This was displayed on the main notice board in the main hallway.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.

- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A copy of all policies were send to parents when they enrolled their child at the service.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (i) Staff rosters were maintained on a daily basis and available for inspection. These correlated with the numbers that were present on the day of inspection.
- (j) The service had a medication administration recording template book available that was completed in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was recorded. Parents signed the report to say they were informed of any such incidents.

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 in the service. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh and were served to the rooms throughout the day. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and an afternoon snack were served to the children who attend for the full day care service. Parents provided the children with a healthy morning snack and all perishable foods were stored in a fridge each day until required. Bacon carbonara, mixed vegetables and pasta were served for dinner on the day of the inspection.

Sanitary accommodation was located next to the Caterpillar room and next to the main entrance hallway. Nappy changing facilities were provided if needed.

Clearly labelled Individual spaces and coat hooks for each child's belongings were available to support organised access and independence for all children attending the service.

Rest areas with soft mats, cushions and blankets were accessible in each of the rooms. Children over 2 years who attended for full day care had access to a separate sleep room in the building. Here children slept on low level

mats with pillows and blankets. A staff member stayed in the room with children while they were asleep. All sleep checks were recorded.

The children had regular change of environment. A sensory room was available for children who need a relaxed space away from the general play areas. This room was also used for individual play time or for small group activities. Children also spend long periods of time in the outdoor playground. A sheltered area outside allowed children access the playground in all weather conditions.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs

The children from the Butterfly room used the sanitary accommodation next to the main entrance of the building. In the bathroom there were 2 water closets but there was no divider or partition between the 2 toilets. The privacy and the dignity of each child cannot be guaranteed in this area of the service

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered providers have put a partition in place separating both water closets in the bathroom used by the preschool children. This ensures privacy for all children using this facility.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the above changes were forwarded to the office of the Early Years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and the evidence submitted by the registered provider. The non-compliance identified has been adequately 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

General safety

All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas within the building. The front door of the facility was secured with a magnetic lock. A staff member was required to allow access to all entering the service.

All emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed.

There was no blind or curtain cords hanging freely.

All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners. No broken toys were noted on the premises or in the outdoor play areas.

No flexes or cables were located within reach of children.

Infection Control:

A detailed infection control policy was in place and all staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the policy. A high standard of operational hygiene was observed in all areas of the building.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Large open top bins were observed in all rooms of the service. Foot pedal operated lidded bins were not available to ensure hygienic disposal of all waste in the facility and to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Pedal operated lidded bins have been purchased for each room of the service to replace the open top bins.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

An invoice for the purchase of these bins was submitted with the reply by the registered providers to the inspection report.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and all the evidence submitted by the registered provider. The non-compliance identified 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 building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the building were checked in by an authorised person.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) The gate to and from the outdoor playground had a running bolt securing the gate. To prevent unauthorised access to or from the playground a more secure lock system is required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered providers have purchased a magnetic secure locking kit system for the external gate.

Supporting documentation submitted

An invoice for the purchase of the secure magnetic lock kit was submitted with the reply by the registered providers to the inspection report.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and the evidence submitted by the registered provider. The non-compliance identified has been adequately addressed.