

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

M2TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK106
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Name of Service:	Limerick Social Service Council Early Years Service
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Address of Service:	Limerick Social Service Centre, Henry Street, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 2W14
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brian Ryan
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	50
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne J Ryan
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

This full day care service is located in the city of Limerick, and it provides full day, part time and sessional care to children aged from 6 months to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:30am and 17:30 pm for 48 weeks of the year. The service operates from the social service building however parents, children and staff have their own entrance area to the rear of the building. There are 4 playrooms in operation, 1 dedicated sleep room, sanitary facilities for the children and adults and a staff room. Outdoor play areas are located to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were 13 staff working with the children on the day of the inspection including the designated person in charge and the deputy who were available for relief cover if required. All these staff have the appropriate childcare qualifications.

The registered provider does not work in the service.

There were additional staff employed through the community employment scheme some working in the playrooms and others in areas such as the kitchen, preparing and cooking food for the children in the service. Some of these staff had completed a childcare course.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 19, and 27; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 21. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2.

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 into the office of Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(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 and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.
- (2) The files of all the staff members were viewed.
- (a) Two written and validated references were available for all the staff members.
- (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 present and working at the service and were dated within the last three years.
- (d) Police vetting and supporting documentation for one staff who could not get police vetting from the country that they lived in for longer than 6 months were all on file.
- (4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (7)
- 1.
- There was no documented evidence available that the new staff who had recently commenced employment had received appropriate supervision during their probation period. The management of the service had not documented how and when they assessed the new staff members learning outcomes from the induction process and the supervision meetings.
- The staff induction and training policy which was updated and submitted following the inspection stated that subsequent to a staff members induction training, supervision meeting will be held with staff on a monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly basis by the manager.
- 2.
- There was no written evidence that staff had received appropriate training on the children's support and behaviour management policy and staff behaviour policy.

On reviewing the documentation submitted after the inspection in relation to the updated staff training policy it was stated that staff training and development will be well planned, well-resourced and organised efficiently and effectively to ensure a quality service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager stated in the response that:

1. and 2.

That management met with all the staff individually to going through their roles and responsibilities. Each staff member was happy and signed off on their updated training including their roles and responsibilities as childcare staff working with children and colleagues in the service.

Compiled a staff pack for each of the staff and for any new staff due to start.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the updated policies submitted to the inspectorate and a signed copy of updated staff training on services policies including their roles and responsibilities in the service.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 9, points 7 1 and 2.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed and in place in the service.

- The staff training policy.
- The staff supervision policy.
- The children’s support and behavior management policy.
- The staff behavior management policy.
- The Complaints Policy.

Non-Compliance Information

The above policies were not reviewed and updated since 2021 and 2022 and there was no documented evidence available detailing when the staff had last received training on these policies.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager stated in the response that:

All policies were reviewed and updated. Each staff member has signed off that they have read and understood the policies and procedures. Regular meeting will give the staff an opportunity to discuss any issues in relation to the policies.

All policies are available at reception for staff and parents. Policies are also available on the parents school social media platform.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of updated policies were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate including a signed declarations by staff that policies were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 10 Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service.

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) The manager at the service ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at the pre-school service.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 50 pre-school children and 13 adults on the premises working with the children. This included the person in charge and the deputy.

The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

There were 4 preschool children and 2 staff in the Baby Room.

There were 15 preschool children and 4 staff in the Wobbler/Toddler Room

There were 20 preschool children and 3 staff in the Preschool Room 1.

There were 11 preschool children and 2 staff in the Preschool Room 2.

The designated person in charge and the deputy were available to assist in the playrooms if required and to cover management work.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Needs:

A healthy eating policy was available at the service and freshly prepared healthy meals and snacks were served to the children in the service throughout the day. A menu plan was displayed on the main corridor of the premises. Breakfast was served to children on arrival if needed. A nutritious snack was served between 10.00am and 10.30am. Dinner was served at 12.00md. Mash potatoes, mixed vegetables, fish fingers and gravy was served for dinner on the day of the inspection. A mid-afternoon snack was served between 2.30pm and 3.00pm. Supplies of fruit, yogurts and snacks were available from the kitchen throughout the day if needed.

Mealtimes were observed to be unhurried and relaxed. Drinking water and cups were accessible to children in each of the rooms. Each child had easy access to their own cup, beaker and bottle throughout the day.

Sanitary accommodation and nappy changing facilities were located next to each room. Staff were familiar with the procedure outlined in the nappy changing policy to ensure appropriate infection control practices. Children's toiletries were stored close to each changing unit and within easy reach of the staff. Staff washed their hands before and after each nappy change. Gloves and aprons were used, and all were removed when the nappy was changed. Each child had access to a change of clothes if needed. Each room had a supply of tissues and wipes, and foot pedal operated, lidded bins were used for the safe disposal of waste.

A separate sleep room with standard cots were located next to the Baby room. Older children slept on low level beds with pillows and blankets provided. Couches were available in each playroom for the children to relax and rest throughout the day.

Physical and Material Environment:

The service comprised of 4 playrooms, sanitary accommodation areas, a sleep room and outdoor play areas located to the rear and front of the service.

On the day only the Junior and Senior Preschool rooms were viewed, and these were large, spacious, and bright areas with low level, open shelving units available to display play equipment and materials. Defined interest areas included reading areas/rest areas, construction area, home corner, dress up/imaginative play spaces, puzzles, buggies, manipulative play area and small world area. The children were observed playing in the secure outdoor play areas and all were suitable clothed with coats and caps.

(2) The registered provider ensured that no corporal punishment was inflicted in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service. A staff behaviour management policy and a children's support and behaviour management policy were available in the service.

(3) The registered provider ensured that no practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were observed being carried out on a pre-school child whilst attending the service. The staff were observed to respond to the children in a timely and appropriate way when they got upset or cried. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and gentle way.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. The nappies for 2 preschool children in preschool room 2 were not changed in a timely manner. The staff had to be prompted on both occasions as there was an odour in the playroom. This would impact the comfort of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager stated in the response that:

A staff meeting was held with the preschool room staff following the inspection. The importance of attending to the needs of the children in a timely manner was discussed and the impact it has on the children's general comfort and wellbeing throughout the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of meeting with staff.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The couch in preschool room was in a poor state of repair, it was torn and worn making cleaning difficult.
2. There were no sensory and natural materials in the outdoor areas used by the older preschool children on the day of inspection.
 - No sand or water play for sensory play.
 - No supporting equipment in the outdoor kitchen area for imaginative play.
 - No opportunities for risky play exclusive to the outdoor area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager stated in the response that:

1. A new couch was ordered for the preschool room.
2. For the outdoor play area sand was ordered for the mud kitchen and the kitchen will be resourced with recycled old pots and pans for the children's play.

The outdoor area will be reviewed in the New Year with the aim of purchasing additional equipment such as a climbing frame and soft mats .

In the meantime, the service will source other recycled materials and equipment for the outdoor areas.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Copies of equipment ordered.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 21 Equipment and materials. This will be assessed at the next inspection.

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

The registered provider ensured that preschool children attending the service were adequately supervised by ensuring that the correct adult child ratio was in place in the service each day.

Supervision was primarily by sight. The children who used the toilets independently could do so with staff in earshot and available to support them if needed. Close supervision was observed by the staff when children were in the outdoor play area and all staff accompanied children when playing outdoors.

The layout in each room allowed for ease of visual supervision while also facilitating children having some quiet time and space when needed