

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK126			
Name of Service:	Little Seeds Childcare Moyross Community Enterprise Centre Ltd			
Address of Service:	Moyross Community Hub, Moyross, Limerick, Co. Limerick			
Eircode:	V94 VONP			
Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Duggan			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	15/01/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	58	PM	29
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick			
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan E Browne			
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

Description of service

This is a community service which provides sessional, part- time and full day education and care to preschool children. It operates from 08.30hrs to 17.30hrs and is registered to cater for a maximum of 100 children. The school aged service has been discontinued at the present time.

The service operates from a purpose-built building in an urban residential area. There are 5 care rooms in operation namely, beetle room, bumble bee room, caterpillar room, ladybird room and butterfly room. There is a dedicated sleep room with cots for children aged less than 2 years. The service has 5 outdoor play areas located in the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

The service employs 29 staff, staff working directly with the children have childcare qualifications that range from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

There are 2 staff members working in the kitchen with Haccap qualifications.

There is evidence of on-going professional development as most staff have current First Aid certification and all staff have completed child protection training.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well- being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,24,25 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(Health Welfare and development of the child). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the bumble bee room and the caterpillar room.

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 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*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.
- (2) The person in charge had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all 29 staff members and were reviewed on the day of the inspection.
- (a) References from the persons past employers and in particular the most recent employer.
- (b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.
- (c) Vetting disclosures for all 29 staff were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the staff.
- (d) Staff who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer that 6 consecutive months had the required police vetting documentation.
- (4) All staff had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were present. On 15/01/2024 there were 18 staff working directly with 58 pre-school children in the morning and there were 12 staff working with directly with 29 preschool children in the afternoon.

The following demonstrated the number of children and staff present on 15/01/2024.

- Beetle Room - there were 5 children and 3 staff present.
- Bumble Bee Room - there were 13 children and 3 staff present.
- Caterpillar Room - there were 5 children and 4 staff present.
- Ladybird Room - there were 18 children and 4 staff present.
- Butterfly Room there were 17 children and 4 staff present.

Designated staff were appointed for cooking, preparation of meals and administrative duties.

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

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS

The healthy eating policy of the service was available which supported children and parents to choose healthy foods. Dinner consisted of sausages, mashed potatoes, gravy and sweetcorn. Drinking water was available throughout the day if a child was thirsty and needed a drink. The children sat together around the lunch tables with the adults and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food.

The children toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times during the session such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation area with a supply of hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid antibacterial soap available. To support personal cleanliness and prevent cross infection signs were on display to demonstrate the correct coughing technique to be used by the children.

The children could rest and relax as desired in the designated library/quiet areas in each room. There was a designated area downstairs in the hallway called the 'calming cave' where staff spent some quiet time with a child if required. Small groups of children were observed to be taken to the rumpus room by their key worker to play and the 'forest room' was available to the children in the bumblebee room for one-to-one time with staff.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement within each room and play activities were for the most part child lead.

Children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

Staff were observed to be kind, caring and patient in all their interactions with the children. Each child was treated as an individual and had their likes, abilities and natural tendencies understood and respected.

Children could form and maintain secure relationships with the adults through the use of the key person system. Staff were observed to be interested in the children, listened to them and spoke to them using soft tones of voice and positive language, engaging them in conversation and gave each child the opportunity to express themselves. Children's opinions were sought, and their decisions respected which reflected back to them that they were valued.

Photographic evidence of activities undertaken, and art portfolios were available to share with parents and helped support a sense of working in partnership with parents.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Adequate and varied play equipment suited to the age and stage of development of the child was available in each room. Toys and play equipment were rotated having been cleaned and stored in labelled storage boxes. Messy play materials were accessible to the children in each room to support sensorial play. The outside areas were spacious and bright and surrounded by fencing and gates.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The children present in the caterpillar room and the children present in the beetle room did not play outdoors. Children attending for the sessional 3 hours, and part time care 5 hours did not get the opportunity to go outside for play and get some fresh air. The risk assessment done on the day stated it was frosty. All the children had the appropriate hats and coats to keep them warm. On examination of the outdoor areas there was soft matting to cushion the childrens falls. This was at variance with the services outdoor play policy which stated, 'Outdoor play is an important part of the daily curriculum, and the service aims to ensure that children play outdoors every day, it aims to ensure that each child will spend a minimum of 30 minutes outdoors every day'. Children must have the opportunity to play outside as often as possible in all weather conditions except where a risk assessment does not allow.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All rooms are fully equipped with outdoor gear to bring children outside throughout the day in all weathers once it is safe for the child to do so.

The service is ensuring all early years educators are engaging in continuous professional development on the importance of outdoor play in the early years.

Supporting documentation submitted

Not required.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of the non – compliances identified.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Three gates in the outdoor play areas were not secured to protect the premises from any unauthorised entry and/or the unsupervised exit of children from the service.

Infection Control:

2. Hygienic nappy changing practices were not observed to help prevent cross infection between children and children and between children and staff.
 - A staff member washed her hands only once when commencing nappy changing and then at the end when a number of children had been changed. This was at variance with the information documented on the nappy changing policy.
 - Childrens hands were not washed following nappy changing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All outdoor gates have signs to remind staff/parents to close gates. Each room completes a risk checklist to ensure that all gates are checked as priority first thing in the morning and throughout the day.

Infection Control:

2. Training on the importance of hand washing has been organised for the next staff training day in March highlighting the importance of hand hygiene, education and promotion. Rooms are engaging with a handwashing programme to promote hand washing with the children. Regular supervision will take place to ensure that all early years educators are following appropriate hand washing procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted of signs on gates requesting that parents close gates at all times.

Infection Control:

The Infection control policy submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of the non – compliances identified.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) All pre-school child who attended the service on the day were recorded on the attendance register and it included their time of arrival and their time of departure.

(3) (a) No persons could enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee other than the following,

(i) A Pre-school child.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A daily record in writing was kept of the entry on the premises of any such person on the visitors book.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) One staff held a current certification in first aid response for children and there were persons trained in first aid available to the children at all times.

(2)(a) A suitable equipped first aid box was stored in the reception area, and one was also available in the preschool room downstairs.

(b)The first aid box was available at all times if required by a child.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance for the service was available and had an expiry date of March 2024.