

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK135
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Name of Service:	Nursery Times
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Address of Service:	28 Mallow Street, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 TF21
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah O'Doherty
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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
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Description of service

Nursery Times is a private, full day childcare service located in Mallow St, Limerick city. It offers a service to children of all preschool ages. It is opened Monday to Friday from 7.00am to 7.00pm.

The premises are an old Georgian building with three floors and basement available to the preschool service.

The service has 4 playrooms in operation, a Wobblers playroom, Toddlers playroom, Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2. There are 2 sleep rooms available, a kitchen, nappy changing and sanitary facilities for children and adults and an office.

There is a well-resourced outdoor play area located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were 14 staff working with the children including the manager and deputy manager. An additional staff member works in the kitchen preparing snacks and meals. All staff working with the children have achieved an award in Early Childhood Care and Education. .

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,15,19,23 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Childrens Records.

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 provider, 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) There was the registered person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises as outlined in the staff roster.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- (2) There were no new members of staff employed since the last inspection of the service on 14/01/2023. Records for all staff had been reviewed on previous inspection of the service in January 2023.
- The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all the staff employed.
- (a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer were available.
 - (b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers were available.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in was available in respect of all staff.
 - (d) Police vetting was in place for the staff members who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 12 staff working across 3 rooms with 35 children present in the morning and 33 children present in the afternoon. The minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each room.

Additional staff were available to cover for staff breaks /office management.

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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

A sample of 15 records of a preschool child were reviewed on the day.

(1) (a) - (i) was contained on each record of a preschool child.

(3) Records referred to in (1) were open to inspection on the premises by

(a) A parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to their child.

(b) An employee.

(c) An authorised person.

(4) Records in writing referred to in paragraph (1) were retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceased to attend 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:

A healthy eating policy was available in the service. Each child had their own drinking bottle for water labelled and placed on a shelf accessible to the children. Nutritious and healthy meals were served at regular intervals by the service throughout the day.

Toilet training was based on the child's stage of development and the child's readiness to start training rather than their age.

Children under 2 years of age slept in cots when staff observed the cues that they were becoming tired. Children over 2 years of age sleep on cot beds in a room close to the office and a member of staff remained in the room to ensure the children's safety.

Staff were observed interacting well with the children, using soft tones of voice, using the child's name and getting down to their level and making eye contact.

Staff were observed to be actively involved in children's play in each of the rooms of the service where they initiated play and joined in the games when invited by the children.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

There were 3 playrooms in operation, two sleep rooms, sanitary accommodation areas and an outdoor play area located at the rear of the service.

Adequate and varied play equipment suited to the age and stage of development of the child was available in each room and in the outdoor play area. Surplus play equipment was in storage and used on a rotational basis following cleaning.

Children were observed playing in the secure outdoor play area which was well resourced with outdoor play equipment such as playhouses, picnic benches, ride on toys, mud kitchens, climbing frames, sand boxes and plants.

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:

Amber bead were noted to be worn by a young child in a playroom. The Competition and Consumers Protection Agency states that amber beads are unsafe and pose several serious safety risks to children under 3 years of age.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Children attending the service will no longer be allowed to wear amber beads and this is now documented in the services Healthy and Safety policy which was updated in July of 2023.

All parents were notified of this change and referred onto the Competition and Consumers Protection Agency .

Supporting documentation submitted

The Health and Safety policy for the service was submitted with the CAPA .

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliance identified. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) Staff ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by staff in each room. The service recorded children's entry on roll books in each room.

(3)(a) The person in charge had ensured that no person other than the following can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee,

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(3)(b) Daily records of the entries to the visitor book were maintained.