

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK139		
Name of Service:	Park Childcare		
Address of Service:	Rhebogue, Limerick, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V94 P9V2		
Name of Registered Provider:	Charlene Fitzgerald		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	27/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM 50
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Click or tap here to enter text.	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan, N Mc Endoo.		
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

Park Childcare is a purpose built, full day childcare service located in Rhebogoe on the outskirts of Limerick city. It offers sessional, fulltime and part-time places to children from one year of age upwards. It is operational Monday to Friday from 8.15am to 5.00pm.

At the time of the inspection there was 74 preschool children registered to attend the service. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

The service operates from a 2-storey premises. There are 4 well developed pre-school rooms located on the ground floor and 3 interconnecting Pre-school rooms located on the first floor in the building. Sanitary facilities are located adjacent to each room in the service. There is a large sleep room on the ground floor. A kitchen where meals are prepared each day is located at the rear of the building.

There are 3 outdoor play areas in the service, 1 to the front of the building and 2 outdoor areas to the rear of the building. Children spend long periods of time outdoors every day.

Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge of operating the service and works full time at the facility. An assistant manager is also employed at the service. There are an additional 17 staff employed to work at the facility. Relief staff are available to cover lunch breaks, staff holidays and absenteeism when required. Staff engage in continuous professional development training and courses on an ongoing and regular basis.

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, 11, 15, 16, 19, 24, 28 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and 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 registered provider was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(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.

(d) Police vetting was available for one 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) On the day of the inspection 11 of the 12 staff working directly with the children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) There was 1 staff member working at the service who did not have her Early Childhood Care and Education course completed. All staff require a minimum of certification at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In reply to the report the registered provider stated the following

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The staff member who had not completed her studies in Early Childhood Care and Education will have completed the final modules of the course by October 2023. While studying she has relocated to a different area of the service and will not resume working with pre-school children until she has the required certification.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider stated in her reply that all staff will have the minimum of certification at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework prior to taking up employment at the service.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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 62 pre-school children and 12 adults on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

(2) There were 6 preschool children and 2 staff in the Wobbler Room 1.

There were 10 preschool children and 2 staff in the Wobbler Room 2.

There were 11 preschool children and 2 staff in the Toddler Room

There were 18 preschool children and 3 staff in Preschool Room 1

There were 8 preschool children and 2 staff in Preschool Room 2

There were 9 preschool children and 1 staff in Preschool Room 3

Relief staff were available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to all children attending 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 14 children's registration forms were reviewed with samples selected from all rooms of the service. There was a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these 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 where the family has registered with a general practice.
- (h) Record of each child's immunisation for 12 of the 14 forms sampled.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (h) The record of immunisations was not completed on 2 of the 14 forms reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In reply to the report the registered provider stated the following

Corrective and Preventive Action

Parents have been asked to update all immunisation records for the children who attend the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

In the corrective action plan the registered provider stated that all records will be completed prior to children enrolling at the service and the immunisation records will be revised as required as children complete their vaccination programmes.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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 registered providers ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service. This information was emailed to all parents in the services when they enrolled their child.
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of each staff member working at the service.
 - (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 and were found to be comprehensive and detailed.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily. This was recorded in each individual room and children's details were filled out when they arrived and when they left the service.
 - (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 record template available that could be used 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.

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 in place in the service. A variety of nutritious meals and snacks are prepared on site each day and served to each individual room. Breakfast was offered to children on arrival. A mid-morning snack of fruit and crackers were served at 10am. Dinner was served at midday. A mid afternoon snack of sandwiches and wraps were served at 3pm and milk and cookies were offered at 5pm. A menu plan which rotates every 3 weeks was shared with parents. Jugs of water and cups were accessible to all children in each of the rooms.

Sanitary accommodation was located next to each room in the service. Nappy changing facilities were provided next to the Wobbler rooms, and close to the Toddler and Preschool room 1. All toiletries for the children were safely stored and clearly labelled and were located within easy reach of all staff. The privacy and the dignity of the children was respected. Toilet training was based on each child's developmental stage and their own readiness to start, rather than their age.

Each room had a supply of tissues and wipes within easy reach of the children. Foot pedal, lidded bins were easily accessible for the safe disposal of used tissues and paper towels.

Clearly labelled individual storage spaces and coat hooks with each child's photos, for their personal belongings were available to support organised access and independence for the children.

There was a large sleep room located on the ground floor with 8 good quality standard cots accessible to the children in the service under 2 years of age. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all sleep checks were documented in writing. The toddlers over 2 years who required a sleep had access to a low-level bed in the sleep room if required. A staff member remained in the sleep room at all times while children slept.

Rest areas with soft seating, soft floor coverings, cushions and blankets were accessible in each of the rooms at the service. Staff throughout the service encouraged quiet periods during the day to facilitate each child's need for comfort, rest and relaxation.

The children had regular change of environment. They spend long periods of time outdoors and a rota for outdoor play ensured children got outside as often as possible.

In Wobbler room 2, the doors to the outside remained open and children had a choice whether they played indoors or outdoors. Sheltered areas were provided outside for the children allowing them to access the playground in all weather conditions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The physical and the material environments of each room in the service was carefully planned to ensure children had lots of opportunities at developing social, emotional, cognitive, physical and interactive skills. The atmosphere in each room was calm and relaxed, unhurried and encouraging. Children were busy in all rooms engaged in lots of age-appropriate play activities. In the wobbler room there were lots of soft furnishing suitable for long periods of floor activities. Toys and play materials were stored in floor boxes making it easy for children to pick and choose what they wanted to engage with. In the Toddler room and the Pre-school rooms there were numerous table-top activities set up, building and construction play areas, art equipment with lots of art easels, paint pots and brushes accessible, messy play areas, sensorial play spaces, imaginative play areas with kitchen areas, home corners and dress up clothes accessible. Toys and equipment were rotated, and internal and external spaces redesigned depending on each child's preferences, interests and abilities.

Children had opportunities to be outside as often as possible and in all weather conditions. Opportunities to develop gross motor skills were facilitated outdoors on the play equipment and climbing frames. Mud Kitchens provided opportunity for imaginative play, picnic benches and outdoor seating facilitated tabletop activities outside. On the day of the inspection a graduation ceremony was held for preschool children outside. Parents, grandparents and siblings attended and lots of family photographs were taken. Refreshments were served to all visitors and children outside after the ceremony.

Non-Compliance Information

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The bookshelves in Wobbler room 1 and in Preschool room 1 were located too high on the wall and the books were not freely visible or accessible to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In reply to the report the registered provider stated the following

Corrective and Preventive Action

Each room has bookshelves located at various levels. Some are high and store books for staff use, others are low down and store books at an accessible level for children.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider stated that a wide variety of reading material is always available and accessible to the children and the reading material is appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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) Each child on arrival to the service was checked in by a staff member in each designated room. At home time the staff met each parent or guardian and signed the child out of the service. All records were documented in writing.

(3)(a) All access and exit doors and gates (3) were secured using a code and keypad. The front door to the service had a buzzer and staff from inside approved admission to all visitors entering the premises.

(b) A sign in and a sign out book records each persons details on arrival and departure to the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 75 preschool children to attend the full day care service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2023 and expired on the 27th of March 2024.

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 premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally.
- (b) All areas appeared safe and secure with keypads located high on each access and exit door. A regular health and safety check of the premises was completed by the registered provider.
- (c) All room were adequately lit and heated.
- (d) All areas of the service appeared clean and well maintained. Plans to repaint the service were in place over the summer months.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
 1. The mechanical ventilation in the downstairs nappy changing area across from Preschool room 1 was not working. No natural ventilation was available in this area of the service.

2. The room temperature in the sleep room was recorded at 21.5 degrees Celsius. All sleep room temperatures must be maintained between 16 and 20 degrees Celsius.

(e) The hot water in the upstairs sanitary accommodation was not working on the day of the inspection. It is acknowledged that this was rectified by the registered provider on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In reply to the report the registered provider stated the following

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The mechanical ventilation in the downstairs nappy changing area across from Preschool room 1 has been fixed and is in working order.

To help maintain adequate room temperature in the sleep room a mobile air conditioner is in the room. This device has helped maintain the temperatures between 16 and 20 degrees Celsius.

(e) The hot water in the upstairs sanitary accommodation has been repaired and is now in working order.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider stated in her reply to the report that staff will check for faults in the heating, ventilation and water temperature thermostats on a more regular basis and all issues will be highlighted to management without delay.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.