

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK154
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Name of Service:	Tait House Community Creche
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Address of Service:	Tait House, Collins Avenue, Roxboro Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 NXT8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michael Quilligan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	20/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	37
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, 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

This full day community service is located in an urban area of Limerick city, and it provides full day care, part time and sessional care to children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The opening hours are from 08:30 – 17:30 hours, Monday – Friday for 51 weeks of the year. The service has a maximum capacity for approximately 80 preschool children. This childcare facility has 5 playrooms in operation, dedicated sleep areas off 2 playrooms, sanitary facilities for children and adults, a kitchen, office and outdoor play areas to the front and rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 24 staff members working in the service including the manager and deputy manager.

There were 15 staff working across 5 playrooms, and additional staff scheduled to work in the kitchen, office and cleaning and maintenance work.

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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 21, 23, and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered person in charge 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. Team leaders were appointed in each room of the service.

(2) The files of 25 staff members were checked and the following documents were available for inspection:

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer were available for 24 staff.

(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 the staff.

(d) Police vetting was in place for staff members who had lived in another state for a period of 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) All staff working directly with children attending the service had an award in Early childhood Care and Education ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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 service operated 5 playrooms from 08.30am to 17.30hrs each day. On the day of the inspection there were 41 pre-school children and 13 staff present, including the manager for the morning sessions, and 37 preschool children and 10 staff members present for the afternoon sessions.

Overall, in the service the adult child ratio was compliant with the requirements of Regulation 11.

There were additional staff available for the cleaning, kitchen and clerical duties and for the care of the school aged children.

(2)

At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in 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 at the service. The service provided all the foods, drinks and snacks for the children each day. Breakfast was offered to the children each morning on arrival followed by a snack if required. The service provides a hot dinner each day. On the day of the inspection children had a beef stew with mash potatoes and vegetable for dinner. Children had access to their own drinks at mealtimes. Staff were observed sitting with children while eating, making mealtimes a social occasion.

Nappy changing facilities and toilets were located close to each preschool room. This facilitated safe supervision of children at all times. A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Outdoor jackets and footwear were available for all children to use in wet weather

The children under 2 years of age had access to two separate sleep rooms off the playrooms. Some of the cots were shared but each child had their own individual linen. The cots were cleaned, and linen changed for the children sharing a cot. Children were checked every 10 minutes, and all checks were documented in writing. The older children had access to a cot bed with their own sheet and blanket.

Since the last inspection the bean bags were removed and replaced with low size couches. These provided a quiet area for children to rest and relax when tired.

The older children and most of the younger children got the opportunity to be outdoors at some stage throughout the day. The younger children were taken outdoors in the buggy.

To encourage free movement and a more open-door policy between the indoor and outdoor environments the doors when in an open position were secured safely to the wall with a latch to ensure the safety of the children.

The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were more suitable for the children ages and stage of development. Plates and metal forks were used by the older children. Easy grip forks, spoons and spill proof cups were available for the younger children. Bibs were available for the babies and toddlers at meal times.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Since the previous inspection each playroom has been painted and the walls that were overpopulated with posters, artwork and service information have been decluttered.

The atmosphere in the playrooms was inviting, comfortable, calm and laid out to accommodate the needs of all the children and adults in the setting.

The Baby, Wobbler and Toddlers rooms had lots of soft floor mats to provide comfort for the children crawling and to facilitate many floor-based activities. Comfortable adult seating was accessible in each room.

Toys and equipment were stored on low level open shelving, making it easy for children to independently choose their choice of materials to engage with.

In the Pre-school and ECCE Montessori rooms there were numerous well developed interest areas, building and construction play spaces, art and craft facilities with art easels, paint pots and brushes accessible, messy play areas with sand, water and rice play, imaginative play areas with home corners accessible, dress up clothes and mirrors. All rooms had reading areas with a good variety of reading material. There was an emphasis in each room on the use of natural, open ended play materials.

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.

Compliance Information

The service has increased the supply of play and work materials for example bikes, water tray and a new climbing frame were added to one outdoor area used by the children from all the playrooms.

Non-Compliance Information

The grassy outdoors area off the Wobblers playroom, and the areas to the front of the service used by the older preschool children remain poorly developed in terms of enough natural and open-ended materials/ equipment. The manager stated that there were plans to develop these areas and to increase the variety and quantity of open-ended materials and equipment in these areas. However, no time schedules were available as to when the work will begin and how long it will take to complete this work.

Children must have the opportunities to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions, except where a risk assessment does not allow. The equipment and materials in the outdoor play areas must support children's play, movement and exploration, and provide opportunities exclusive to the outdoors.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

The manager stated in the corrective and preventive form that the following measures were taken:

The long-term plan for the front play area is the removal of the gravel mound and creation of a much more open and free flowing space. This project will require input from architects and other contractors and resource availability for this is currently being examined.

In the interim, the service have begun work on removal of some fences to improve flow and visibility of the outdoor space. In this space more natural and open-ended materials will be supplied e.g., tyres, planks of wood, crates, mud kitchens, pots, and pans. These items will allow the children to explore and make items that are of interest to them. This area will be complete by May 10th.

The area off the Wobblers room is currently having a sensory footpath developed, leading to a construction play area. This will help the sensory needs of some children and help them to remain calm and relaxed. Sand and water play and art easels can also be used in this area as needed. Teepees have been constructed from natural timber and are used by children for seating and relaxation. A music wall is being developed, comprised of hanging pots and pans that children can use to explore sound. This area will be complete by April 29th.

Once this area is completed the children will have an open plan area to explore. Opening this space will allow children of different ages to mix. Each room has a chain and hook mechanism where the side doors can be left open allowing children access to go freely between inside and out. Parents provide wet gear to be kept in the

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

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 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:

Since the last inspection the damaged sun canopy was removed. The manager stated that the service was looking at alternative options.

Infection Control:

The service was able to demonstrate that the nappy changing disposable bins were removed twice a week. No foul smell was noted in the sanitary accommodation.

This was monitored and signed by the staff and management.

Administration of Medication:

The parents supply creams, lotions and suncreams for their child. These were labelled and stored appropriately with each child's belongings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were no steps to facilitate the children to climb safely onto and off the nappy changing unit located between the Baby and Wobblers playroom. The staff were observed to lift each child on and off the nappy changing table and this posed a potential risk to the health and safety of the staff members and the children.

Infection Control:

2. Hygienic nappy changing practices were not observed to help prevent cross infection between children and children and between children and staff and this was at variance with the nappy changing policy for the service. This was highlighted in the previous report dated 18/07/2023.
3. Aprons and gloves were not removed by one member of staff member following each nappy changing. This staff was observed returning to the playroom with the child and still wearing the apron and gloves worn while nappy changing. This increased the risk of cross infection.

Children's hands were not observed to be washed after they had their nappies changed. This increased the risk of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The manager stated in the corrective and preventive form that the following measures were taken:

1. Steps have been purchased to allow children to climb safely onto the changing unit. This will reduce the potential risk to staff and children.

Management met with staff and explained that going forward steps are to be used for the general safety of staff and children and that the lead educators will ensure that this happens.

Infection Control:

The manager stated in the corrective and preventive form that the following measures were taken:

2. and 3. The procedure for nappy changing and handwashing is displayed in each changing unit. All staff have been retrained in the new procedure to reduce this risk of cross infection. All staff are aware that gloves and aprons must be removed before entering the playroom and both child and staff must wash their hands. A staff meeting was held with lead educators where they were informed that it is their responsibility to ensure that all staff follow these procedures and the importance of handwashing and that cross infection can be reduced by regular handwashing for staff and children.

All signs have been put in prominent places. Lead educators will ensure handwashing occurs before mealtimes, after using the bathroom and having their nappy changed. Staff will ensure their hands are washed before returning to the playroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23 points General Safety and Infection Control.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(d) Since the previous inspection the entrance area, corridor and playrooms walls and skirting were painted. There has been some work such as painting carried out in the outdoor areas, a schedule has been put in place to complete the outstanding maintenance work in this area.

Cleaning schedules were updated and signed off by management when tasks were completed. Floors and mats were cleaned and some replaced as required.

The rubber safety protector around the pole in the outdoor area was replaced.