

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH046		
Name of Service:	Early Buds Creche		
Address of Service:	2 Castle Hill, Slane, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 X744		
Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Hickey		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	08/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM 19
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan Co. Meath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham & C Tunney		
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
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Description of service

Early Buds Creche is a full day service established in 2006. The service is located on the outskirts of Slane in a residential area. The service provides sessional, full day care and part time education and care to pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years and school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates a sessional service from 9.30am to 12.30pm daily.

The service operates from 7.00am to 18.30pm and is registered to cater for a maximum of 45 pre-school children

Staffing

Twelve staff are employed in the service, which includes the registered provider, a deputy manager, a cook and nine childcare staff. There were 10 adults present on the day of inspection and of these 9 were providing direct care to the children.

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.

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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Twelve staff members are employed in the service which includes the registered provider, deputy manager, nine childcare practitioners and a cook. The registered provider does not work in the service but available to staff when required. Twelve files were reviewed.

(a)& (b) Twenty-four references were available.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures was available for all staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for the two staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Ten staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) One staff member did not hold an appropriate childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated that the staff member is no longer working in the service.

Preventive Action

Early Bud's staff recruitment policy and code of behaviour policy has been updated to ensure all new employees hold a minimum QQI Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education certificate before employment commences.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 9.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

1) There were an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.

The rooms were as follows:

Junior Preschool room: Two staff cared for 7 children ranging in age from 2 years to 3 years. Six children were attending on full day care and one child was attending on a sessional basis.

Senior Preschool room: not operating on the day of inspection.

Montessori room: Three staff cared for 14 preschool children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years. Thirteen children were attending on a full day care basis with 1 child attending on a part-time basis.

(8)(a) The designated person in charge ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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-
(c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(15)(a) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in respect of the fifteen records sampled containing particulars as specified in Regulation 15 (a) to (j).

(3) The children's records were available and open for inspection by an authorised person. Fifteen children's records were inspected and were completed correctly.

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 serv*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 16(1) (a) to (k) in relation to the service. These records were available in folders such as a folder containing staff details, the service policies & procedures, records.

Additionally, information relation to the service and staff details was displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of staff and parents/guardians.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were made available.

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.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Adequate, suitable, nutritious, and varied food and drink was observed to be available for each pre-school child attending the service. Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack and meal without being rushed.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected. Toileting and nappy changing were carried out in a sensitive manner. Each child has access to a change of clothes, if needed.
- The children in the Preschool room were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Regular hand washing was observed by the children.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the pre-school rooms in use.
- Children enjoyed a variety between indoor and outdoor play.

Supporting Relationships around the Children:

- The children’s need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met as each of the care rooms were provided with a rest area consisting of soft matting and cushions. The children were able to access the rest area as they chose for play or quiet time.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs at children’s level in the care rooms. The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

1)(b) Children slept on stackable beds in the Junior Preschool room. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats, and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to the rear of the premises.

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

- All the care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- Equipment in the outdoor areas included small slides, large wooden playhouses, ride on cars, water play, and parachute games. Two covered areas were available that facilitated children to have outdoor play in all weather conditions.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a weekly menu plan with a variety of dishes cooked on site. On the day of inspection, morning snack was provided by parents and mainly consisted of yogurts, sandwiches and fruit. The main meal of the day was served at 13:00 pm which consisted of potatoes, goujons, broccoli and carrots.

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:

The following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured with a bell system and the outdoor space was enclosed and secured. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The water in the sanitary accommodation in the service was cold and did not facilitate effective handwashing.

Fire Safety:

2. Fire drills were not carried out on a monthly basis, the last recorded fire drill available was March 2023.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

1. The water element has now been replaced by a plumber and the water temperature is now heated to 40.9°C for effective handwashing. Please find invoice and temperature evidence attached. A copy was sent to the EYI on 15.08.2023.
2. A fire drill has been undertaken. Please find attached. A copy was sent to the EYI on 10.08.2023.

Preventive Action

1. Water temperature will be checked on a monthly basis to facilitate effective handwashing.
Please find check sheet attached.
2. Fire drills will be completed on a monthly basis, so all staff and children are prepared for the event of a fire. Please find updated policy attached.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 23.

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) A record was maintained which documented details of children's daily attendance in the service which was maintained in all care rooms. A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school.
- (3)(a) The inspectors noted that authorised persons only were allowed to enter the pre-school.
- (b) A visitor's book was available and maintained, the inspectors were requested to sign 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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced on 01/09/2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 17/02/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms.

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

Children in the service were always supervised throughout the inspection.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 45 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.