

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH157		
Name of Service:	Ratoath Childcare Centre Limited		
Address of Service:	Jamestown, Ratoath, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A85 CX82		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ellen Holian		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	10/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM 38
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray, AM. Cunningham & S. Cully		
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

Ratoath Childcare Centre Ltd is situated on the outskirts of the town in 2 purpose-built facilities. The service provides a sessional, part-time and full day care service to children from 0-6 years and is registered to operate from 08:00am to 6pm. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The service consists of 7 childcare rooms and 4 school aged rooms in the following buildings:

In Building A: Downstairs there were the following rooms:

The **Waddler Room** which catered for children from 1 to 2 years

The **Toddler Room** facilitated the care of children from 2 to 2 years 8 months.

The **Play-School Room** (full day care) provided care for children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

The **Pre-school Room** (full day care) provides care and education to children from 4 to 5 years.

Other facilities included a kitchen/staff area, resource room, office sanitary facilities and a reception area.

Upstairs: **The Play School Room** (sessional/ECCE) provides care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

Pre-school Room Montessori is an extra room available to take smaller groups of children from the Pre-school Room (full day care), usually to participate in Montessori work.

In Building B there were the following rooms:

The **Montessori Room** (ECCE) provides care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 4 to 5 years.

The remainder 4 care rooms were used to accommodate the school aged children.

Other facilities included a kitchen and sanitary facilities. The service had 4 outdoor areas in use on the day of inspection.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, deputy manager, 15 childcare staff, 1 auxiliary staff and 3 cooks.

Present on the day of inspection were the manager, deputy person in charge, 12 childcare staff, 1 auxiliary staff member and 3 cooks.

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.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,&28.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, 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 inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) From a review of the service file and discussion with the manager it was confirmed that 5 new childcare staff and 1 cook had been employed in the service since the last inspection. These files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

- (a) Five validated written references were available from a past employer.
- (b) Six validated written reference were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the six new staff.
- (d) Not applicable as no new staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The 5 new childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b) One validated written reference was not available for 1 staff member from a past employer or from a source other than a past employer.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

One validated written reference has been obtained from a reputable source and has been placed on file. All staff members now have 2 validated written references on file. The registered provider will ensure that staff files are audited on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

One validated written reference.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 9 (2)(b) Management and recruitment. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) On the day of inspection there was a manager, deputy person in charge, 12 childcare staff working directly with the 67 children attending the service. One auxiliary staff member doing her level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education was available to the staff member in Building B, if needed.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

In Building A : Downstairs:

The **Waddler Room** had 5 children between the ages of 1 to 2 years being cared for by 2 adults with a third staff member coming on duty at 10:30am.

The **Toddler Room** had 10 children between the ages of 2 to 2 years 8 months being cared for by 2 adults with a third staff member coming on duty at 10:30am.

The **Play School room** (full day care) had 19 children between the ages of 3 years 1 month and 4 years 5 months being cared for by 2 adults.

The **Pre-school Room** (full day care) had 7 children between the ages of 4 to 5 years being cared for by 2 adults.

Upstairs: The Play School Room(sessional/ECCE) had 9 children between the ages of 2 years 8 months to 4 years being cared for by 1 adult.

The **Pre-school Room Montessori** had 8 children between the ages 4 to 5 years being cared for by 1 adult.

In Building B:

The **Montessori Room** (ECCE) had 9 children between the ages of 4 years to 5 years being cared for by 1 adult. An auxiliary staff member who is doing her level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education was available to this staff member to provide support if needed. This staff member was supervised at all times.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced by the staff roster.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members in all care rooms were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their play activities. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones when engaging with the children and showed a keen interest in what each child was doing.
- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. In the Waddler and Toddler rooms children who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Although the day was wet, outdoor play was facilitated for most of the children with the children dressed appropriately in their coats and hats.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- A written record was kept in the Waddler and Toddler room of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed on to parents or guardians when collecting their child at the end of the day.

- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on 'The Family Wall' 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 in the Play School room (full day care) enjoyed planting vegetables in their individual pots. The children from the Pre-school Room also attending the Pre-school Room Montessori rotating for approximately an hour. The children in these rooms were excited about their new additions to the room "the Caterpillars" as the theme being discussed was the life cycle of the butterfly. 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The cot room off the Waddler room had 5 cots for children under 2 years requiring sleep an additional cot was available in a room off the sleep room available to the Toddler room. The sleep room for the Toddler room had 8 stackable beds with an additional 12 stackable beds stored in a room off the sleep room for the children over 2 years. 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)

- The outdoor area for the Waddler and Toddler rooms had an all-weather surface which was enclosed with walls and had a secure gate.
- An outdoor area at the front of the service had a grass surface, was enclosed by fencing with a secure gate. A second outdoor area was available to the front of the service which was enclosed and had a hard surface along with an all-weather surface.

- The outdoor area for Montessori Room in Building B was an enclosed paved space to the rear of the building that also consisted of a sheltered space. To the side of the building was an enclosed grass area. One end of this area was also used by Montessori Room.

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.
- The outdoor area for the Waddler and Toddler rooms had plastic slides, rockers, toy cars, mud kitchen, sand pit and a plastic play kitchen.
- The outdoor areas at the front of the service had a sand pit, ride on toys and a small slide. The second outdoor area to the front of the service had covered benches, climbing frame, swings, mud kitchen, and road markings on the hard surface area as a track for ride on toys. Access to this area is through the dining room.
- In Building B, the outdoor space for Montessori Room had a mud kitchen and pots and pans under the sheltered area, along with moveable balancing equipment. There was a goal post and basketball net. Staff members explained that they also set up games and bring materials outdoors.

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 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from vegetarian, meat, fish and poultry cooked on site. All food was provided by the service. On the day of inspection, the children had a variety of cereals for breakfast. Morning snack consisted of ham sandwiches and banana. The main meal of the day was served between 11:30 and 12:30pm which consisted of Chilli Con Carne with boiled rice. An alternative minced beef dinner was offered to children who did not like the choice on the menu. Fish fingers, peas and rice was provided for the children who did not eat meat. Evening tea was served at 3:30pm which consisted of bagels, cream cheese, chicken slices and mixed salad. Additional snacks were available for the children staying until 6pm if required. Water and milk were the drinks of choice.

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 buzzer 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.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- Liquid soap, paper hand towel and warm water not exceeding 43⁰ C was available at the sinks in the sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Thermometers were available in the cot room off the Waddler room and in the sleep room for the Toddler room to ensure the temperature of the rooms were maintained between 16 to 20⁰ C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log on each child recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area to the front of the main door the following were noted:

- A steel table frame had broken wooden pieces which would cause a splinter injury to a child.
- Exposed loose felt around the sand pit posed a trip hazard.

2. In the paved outdoor area to the rear of Building B, there was loose wire posing a trip hazard coming from the fence in 2 areas:

- In the fence that was road facing.
- To the side where the fencing meets the wall.

Infection Control:

3. In the outdoor area for the Waddler/Toddler rooms there was no cover on the sand pit. The felt cover on the sand pit in the outdoor area to the front of the premises was torn. Sand pits must have secure coverings to prevent against animal excreta.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1&2 All hazards have been removed from the outdoor areas. The registered provider will ensure that a risk assessment is conducted on a regular basis to ensure that the outdoor areas are safe.

Infection Control:

3.All sand pits now have temporary covers. The outdoor areas are being refurbished over the summer months. The registered provider will ensure that the sand pits are covered on a daily basis to prevent contamination.

Supporting documentation submitted

1&2 Photographic evidence has been received of the following hazards removed:

Steel table frame; Exposed loose felt; loose wire.

3. Photographic evidence of covers replaced on the sand pits.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 23. Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) In all care rooms in Block A building all children were checked in and out of the service by the staff in each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On arrival to the Montessori Room in Building B at 11.55am, the children had not been checked in on the classroom register.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the Montessori room the children are now checked in and out on the register. The registered provider will ensure that this practice is conducted on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation was completed and seen on the day of inspection.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance.

The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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. The last recorded fire drill took place in May 2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 02/06/2022. The fire fighting equipment was due for servicing with a servicing record submitted to the inspectorate the day after the inspection 11/05/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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 130 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.