

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH162		
Name of Service:	Sandy's Crèche & Montessori		
Address of Service:	Grange Hall, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A85 TK75		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Rooney		
Service type:	Sessional		
Dates of Inspection:	13/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM 0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray		
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

Sandy's Crèche & Montessori is 1 of 2 childcare facilities operated by the registered provider. The service provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The sessional service operates from 09:30 to 12:30 hours.

A breakfast club is offered to school aged children from 07:00am to 09:00 am and a school aged service operates from 1:30pm to 6:30pm.

The service is purpose-built and consists of the following rooms:

Downstairs:

The **Junior** room which caters for children from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 8 months.

The **Montessori** room caters for children from 3 years 8 months to school going age.

A **School aged room** with a smaller side room.

Upstairs:

A **School aged room**.

The service also has an office, kitchen, sanitary facilities and an outdoor space.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager and 6 staff members. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was present with 6 childcare staff which included 1 staff member who was providing cover for 1 of the core staff members. The manager arrived to the service at 10:30am when the inspection had commenced.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

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) (a)&(b) Eighteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for 18 staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided in 2 jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Eighteen 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

(6A) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) On the day of inspection, the correct adult/child ratio was maintained.

- In the **Junior** room, there were 3 staff members with 17 children.
- In the **Montessori** room 2, there were 3 staff members with 16 children. The manager and registered provider were also available to provide assistance to the care rooms if needed.

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 of the Infants and Children:

- Children moved about the rooms freely engaging in tabletop activities, free play and imaginary role play. The environment in both rooms provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development.
- Children's individual needs were well supported by the staff members who engaged in play activities with the children which included sensory play, art and crafts, singing and storytelling. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement, and reassurance.
- Children's personal hygiene was attended to with regular handwashing and supervision while using the toilet. Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 11am. Staffs member were observed sitting and chatting with the children at lunch time, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers.
- In the Junior room the theme of the week was "All About Me" and in the Montessori room it was "Numbers, colours, fine and gross motor activities" with art work displayed to reflect these themes.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff worked in partnership with the parents of new children settling in. Some parents were allowed to accompany their child to the care room and to stay to help their child settle into their new environment. During the session children who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they were ready to re-join the group.
- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. New children were supported and encouraged to develop interaction and friendships with other children. Once the new children had settled the children in both rooms 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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016 shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of bean bags were available in both rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest.

(2)(a) The outdoor space was divided into 2 areas. One area accommodated the pre-school children and the younger school aged children. This area was partially sheltered and permitted outdoor play in all types of weather. The second area was used for the older school aged children.

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

- Both 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, Montessori equipment, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books. All play materials and equipment were easily accessible on open shelving at the children’s height which encouraged active engagement and involvement.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a mud kitchen with utensils, wooden bench, activity tray, sand table, plastic stacking boxes and building blocks, wooden dolls house, balancing walking frame, bouncing balls, play house, plastic slide and play cars.

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 gate and door to the service was secured and the outdoor space was enclosed and secure. 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.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed.

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis. Tables were cleaned after activities before meals.
- Fridges were available for the perishable items in the children's lunch boxes.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Bins which were used for food and general contaminated waste were hand operated which increases the risk of cross contamination. Bins used for food and contaminated waste must be foot pedal operated to reduce this risk.
2. Perishable items including meat and dairy products provided by parents/guardians for the morning snack were stored in the children's bags at room temperature rather than in a fridge. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The bins have been replaced with foot pedal operated bins. The registered provider/manager will ensure that all bins containing food and general contaminated waste are foot pedal operated.
2. Children's lunches that contain perishable items are now stored in a fridge. The registered provider/manager will monitor this practice on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the following:

Two foot operated pedal bins.

Lunch boxes in a fridge.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23. Infection Control. 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 on 08/09/2023.
- (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 and mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 18/08/2023.
- (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 70 children at any one time attending the sessional and school aged service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.