

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH178		
Name of Service:	Spraoi Childcare		
Address of Service:	Neptune Beach Hotel, Bettystown, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A92 PY6N		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Cooney		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	11/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM 17
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle & S Taaffe		
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		

Description of service

Spraoui Childcare is a full day care service and is one of 5 early years services operated by the registered provider, in Co Meath and Co. Louth in addition to one separate stand-alone school aged childcare facility. Preschool children and school-aged children aged from 2 years up to 12 years of age are currently accommodated in the service from 7.30am to 6.30pm each weekday. There are 4 care rooms in the service namely the Toddler room, Junior preschool room, Senior preschool room and the Naíonra room. Eligible children are facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 8.45am to 11.45am in the Junior preschool room, from 09:05am to 12:05pm in the Naíonra room and from 9.15am to 12.15pm in the Senior Preschool room daily during term time for 38 weeks each year. The service is located on the ground floor of a former hotel in the coastal village of Bettystown, Co Meath, an enclosed outdoor space is located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a service manager to coordinate the operational management of the service and provide support in the care rooms when needed. A further 14 staff members are employed including a cook and housekeeper. The registered provider was present in the service shortly after the inspection commenced and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection and the regional manager was also present in the service during the course of the inspection.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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, regional manager, 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 manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

The files for 20 staff members including the registered provider, regional manager, service manager, a staff member who is currently on statutory leave, a staff member from one of the company's other services and a student who was present on a work placement were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Two validated written references were available for the registered provider, regional manager and 17 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 20 staff members whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 3 staff members who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The registered provider, regional manager, the service manager, the 13 core staff members all of whom who work directly with the preschool children in the service, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) &(b) Two validated written references were not available for 2 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(d) International police vetting was available for one staff member, however it had not been translated and therefore could not be interpreted; international police vetting was not available for a further 2 staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2)(a) &(b)

The 2 references for the student were in another file. Managers have been informed to keep all files together for inspection Checklist amended for staff.

(d)

All Managers have had meeting on all non-compliances that have arose from inspection and have informed staff of these. Staff member has reapplied for police vetting for her staff file.

Preventive Action

(2)(a) &(b)

All student and staff files to be filed together for future inspections. All staff to have completed files prior to starting their position, checklists are in place that have timeframe to complete.

(d)
All staff to have completed files prior to starting their position, checklists are in place that have timeframe to complete. Staff to provide translated police vetting prior to starting position. Staff will only be able to commence in their positions when staff files are completed. Staff checklists have been updated and must be completed prior to staffs first day in.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two validated written references.
International police vetting X 2
Confirmation of application for international police vetting.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has submitted 2 validated written references and evidence of international police vetting for 2 staff members for whom they were outstanding. Evidence of one staff members’ application for international police vetting has been forwarded however as this vetting has to date not been received by the Early year’s inspectorate the regulatory requirement for regulation 9 – Management and recruitment remains outstanding.

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 an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Toddler room there were 6 children aged 2 years 2 months to 2 years 8 month attending on a full day and part time basis, being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Junior Preschool room there were 14 children aged between 2 years 7 months and 3 years 10 months being cared for by 3 staff members. One of the 3 staff members was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and to work directly with a child with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In the Naíonra room there were 15 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 4 years 7 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Senior Preschool room there were 17 children aged between 3 years 7 months to 4 years 7 months being cared for by 3 staff members. One of the 3 staff members was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and to work directly with a child with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in 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.*
- (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

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All of the 12 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3)(c) The children's records were available and open for review by the inspectors as authorised persons.

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:

- Throughout the inspection the early years practitioners were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences.
- The children who attend the service on a full day care basis had their breakfast, dinner and tea provided in the service. A choice of cereal is available for breakfast, all children bring in their own morning snack from home, chicken casserole and mashed potato was served for dinner and pancakes and fruit were served for tea. There was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at mealtimes, with practitioners providing assistance as needed whilst chatting to the children, thus creating a social and relaxed atmosphere.
- The children's personal care needs were promptly attended to. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required and when changing nappies the staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained were accompanied to the bathroom which was located off the main hallway of the service, the children were encouraged to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided as needed.
- The children attending the Toddler room were observed to be placed to sleep on stackable beds in the care room for a scheduled rest period after they had their dinner. Comfortable rest areas comprising of appropriately sized couches, large beanbags, rugs and cushions were available in the care rooms alongside library areas for the children to take a break from activities as they desired throughout the day.
- The practitioners were observed to respond promptly to the children's requests, using regular praise and encouragement to assist the children to play together. Minor disputes between children were dealt with promptly thorough skilful redirection and negotiation.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The practitioners in the service were observed interacting with children in a warm, caring and sensitive manner. Practitioners supported children to interact positively with each other and modelled good social behaviours when interacting with each other, praising children for their behaviours particularly when they were helpful to others, took turns and shared resources.
- Throughout the care rooms the practitioners were observed to work well together as a team and supported each other in the care of the children, providing verbal handovers when breaks were taken thereby ensuring a smooth transition of care for the children.

- A written record of the children’s meals, activities, general wellbeing and if relevant nappy changes and sleep were maintained and shared with parents when the children were being collected from the service. Parent and staff members exchanged information verbally at drop-off and collection.

Physical and material environment:

- The care rooms were bright and welcoming, and the play materials and equipment were accessible on low-level shelving to facilitate children’s independent choice and play.
- The learning environments within each of the 4 care rooms in the service were appropriate to the age and stage of the children attending the individual rooms. Defined interest areas included well-resourced home areas with accessorial equipment such as pots, pans, crockery and play food which enabled the children to extend their imaginary along with dress up materials, art and crafts materials, construction zones, small world, tabletop materials and relaxation areas which supported all areas of development.
- A range of books were available in the library areas of the care rooms which provided choice and supported children’s language development.
- Sensory play was valued in the service, this was demonstrated through the availability of sand and water play throughout the care rooms.
- An enclosed spacious outdoor area was located to the rear of the service; the area was divided into 2 separate sections with a schedule in place to ensure that the children attending both care rooms were provided with the opportunity to spend time outdoors. Both areas were surfaced with artificial grass and had climbing frames in place to support the children’s gross motor play. A large, lidded sand table was provided in the outdoor area directly accessible from the Toddler room, while in both sections tyres and plastic low-level balance beams were provided for the children to enhance their balance along with a range of ride on toys. Practitioners brought additional resources such as transport toys into the outdoor area for the children to use.

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

The following are examples of measures undertaken by the registered provider and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service:

General Safety:

- The premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises, the main entry door to the service leads to a child friendly entrance which was positioned adjacent to a reception area from where the care rooms were accessed by using a secure door with a keypad.
- Cleaning agents were safely stored out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play and outdoor play.
- Appropriate disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being worn for each individual nappy change.
- In the Toddler room soothers were labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use. Practitioners clearly described appropriate procedures for the management of soothers, including washing the items in advance of sterilisation.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored safely out of the reach of children. No child attending the service was observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were being performed and documented on all sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A blind cord in the Toddler room was unsecured, this is a safety risk for the children in attendance.

Infection Control:

2. Some children in the service ate their morning snack directly from the table, this is inadequate for infection control purposes.
3. The water at the sink in the nappy changing area was cold; cold water does not support effective handwashing.
4. A number of children were brought to the nappy changing area together and whilst one child was being changed the other children were observed sitting on and touching the floor. This increased the risk of cross contamination on surfaces and on the children's hands.

Administration of Medication:

5. The services administration of medication policy was observed not to be followed as evidenced by medication administration forms that were reviewed in the Toddler room:
 - A form used to document the administration of medication was incomplete, with no signature of the second staff member who checked the medication or parent signature to confirm sharing of relevant information upon collection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. Blind cord fixed.

Infection Control:

2. All children to be given plates, staff and managers have been informed of this. Staff serve platters of snacks/fruit and serve from centre of tables for children to help themselves while also giving them plates to eat from.
3. Thermostat increased and records completed with increased temperature of water.
4. Nappy Policy has been revised and all staff retrained.

Administration of Medication:

5. Forms have been completed.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Maintenance lists have been put in rooms for staff to complete so no issues go unnoticed. Staff give these to Manager on a Friday morning each week.

Infection Control:

2. More staff training and updating staff on any changes. Kitchen staff informed to put plates in room for snack times.
3. Staff will inform Manager when water not reaching or too hot to adjust temp on boilers.
4. Retraining on policies for both staff and Managers Revised Procedures are now in all of their services.

Administration of Medication:

5. Parents and staff revised on filling out forms. Parents have been sent our forms to familiarise themselves with how to complete medicine forms and that they will be given information on collection and asked to sign off on this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented and photographic evidence was provided including photograph of blind cord, water temperature maintenance record and a copy of the services nappy changing policy.

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider after the inspection. The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has 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) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present in attendance books provided in each care room, noting each child's arrival and departure time on a daily basis.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival to the service on the day of inspection the inspectors were requested to record their attendance on the premises and the purpose of their visit.

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) Three staff members held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training. Based on a review of the staff members' training records and the service's staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

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 firefighting 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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 14/10/2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 03/06/2024 and the smoke detection system on 01/10/2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.