

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY025
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Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings
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Address of Service:	Ferbane Business & Technology Park, Aughaboy, Ferbane, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R42 NR12
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kevin Gavin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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

The Early Years' Service is a community-based service operated by the Ferbane Community Childcare Group Committee. The age range of children enrolled in the service is from 0 to 6 years of age. The opening hours are between 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Five pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a staff room, a kitchen and an office are provided. Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear and side of the service.

Staffing

There were thirteen adults including the assistant manager present on the 25 September 2023. Ten adults were working directly with children. A student was present on work experience in the service.

A cook provided meals for the children attending the service. The designated person in charge and the registered provider were not present. The registered provider does not work with 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 inspection 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 co-operation of assistant 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.*

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT)

REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection.

Twenty-one files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

Thirty-one written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

Six written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and the registered provider.

(d)
Police vetting was available in respect of four staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)
All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5,6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)
No employee had signed a declaration on or before the 30th of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)
Two employees present were working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b)
1. Two written references were not available in respect of the registered provider.
 2. A second validated reference was not available in respect of one staff member.
 3. Two validated references were not available in respect of a student on work placement.

(2)(d)
An international police vetting obtained in the Spanish language had not been translated into English.
A record of work and experience was not available in respect of a staff member and registered provider. This was required for the inspector to ascertain if police vetting was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- (2)(a)(b)
1. Two written references were obtained for registered provider, the two written references were validated by Assistant Manager. Copy attached to email.
 2. All staff members missing validation of references was carried out by Assistant Manager and Deputy Manager. Copy attached to email.

3.Validation of references for student on work placement was carried out by Assistant Manager Copy attached to email.

(2)(d)

International police vetting was translated from Spanish to English.

A record of work and experience was obtained in respect of a staff member and registered provider. Copy attached to email.

Preventive Action

For all future new staff members and students on placement all relative paperwork will be obtained and stored away to their respective files by the management team upon commencing their employment.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory Requirement.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were thirty-two children attending the service supervised directly by ten adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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)

It is acknowledged that the service had engaged in and worked with a quality support service since the last inspection on the 21 October 2022.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routine. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes.

Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. A weekly menu plan was displayed in the entrance hall. All food was freshly prepared by the chef employed in the service. The main meal consisted of chicken stew and mashed potato. Milk and water were served to drink. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required. Water stations and beakers were available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms.

Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Children slept in a in a restful atmosphere and were physically checked by a staff member every 10 minutes. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snacks and mealtimes. Children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff.

All rooms were bright and colourful with children’s artwork and posters displayed. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Cosy rest areas were noted. Younger children were observed to explore their environment and crawl and play on the soft matting provided. Children enjoyed play experiences indoors including table- top activities and sensory play activities.

The service worked in partnership with parents and guardians in the following ways: a verbal handover was given on collection to parents. For younger children a shared diary is in operation between the service and the child’s family to communicate the daily routine including feeding, sleeping, and nappy changing.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Two separate sleep rooms were available and connected to the baby and wobbler rooms. Cots were available for children under the age of two. Low level beds were available for children over the age of two who wished to avail of rest or sleep. Suitable cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

A programme of works has been undertaken for the outdoor play area since the last inspection on 21 October 2022. The grass areas have been reseeded to provide an appropriate play surface for the children. The perimeter wooden fencing has been replaced with a recycled plastic fence. It is acknowledged that the dividing fencing at the outdoor play section for the baby room is due to be upgraded to the new style fencing over the coming months. In addition to the recycled plastic fence the perimeter is secured by a concrete wall and a metal fence with a secure gate.

An absorbent all weather surface play area was available and accessed directly from some of the pre-school rooms. This area was equipped with a variety of bikes, trikes and tractors. A triple slide unit was in place. All children had the opportunity for outdoor play during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(a)

1. The following hazards were noted on the triple play unit:
 - The plastic matting on four of the stair steps had become worn with the edges of each of the four mats broken away leaving an uneven edge which posed a potential trip hazard.
 - The metal railing on either side of the stairs of the unit had rust and the paint was chipped and flaking away which posed a potential injury risk to a pre-school child.
2. A concrete block used as a step up to the wooden playhouse was cracked which posed a potential trip hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(3)(a)

1. A new plastic mat was replaced on the triple play unit. Pictures attached.

The metal railing where it has eroded, has been secured with tough tape until the unit is replaced or repaired in full. Pictures attached.

The parent committee meeting held on 10th of October. Final decision has been made regarding outdoor play unit to repair the current unit and to get additional smaller units e.g. seesaw/swing on phased basis to expand outdoor play area.

2. The concrete block used as a step up to the wooden playhouse has been removed as children are not using the playhouse during the winter months. Pictures attached.

Preventive Action

Additional line is added to the rooms risk assessment to report any repairs to equipment highlighted in yellow on example risk assessment submitted "Outside play equipment clean and in good repair" to maintain outdoor area and equipment in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and written documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory Requirement.

The registered provider shall submit evidence of the work repairs to the play unit to the Early Years inspector upon completion.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Safety checklists were available for review.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Sterilising units was available for the hygienic management of mouthed toys.

Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature at the wash hand basins was recorded at 34 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Soothers were individually labelled and stored hygienically.

Administration of Medication:

No medicine was given at the time of the inspection. A temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. The medication was stored correctly in the service. Emergency care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition. Individual record sheets recorded the required details to support the safe administration of medicine.

Safe Sleep:

In the sleep rooms physical checks were carried out every ten minutes on sleeping children. A sleep log was in place noting the colour, position and breathing of the sleeping child. The temperature of the sleep rooms was recorded as 17 degrees Celsius. Wall mounted thermometers were in place for staff to monitor room temperatures. A staff member remained in the room with children over the age of two who availed of sleep on low level beds.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit routes and signage was in place in the service. Fire exits were free from obstruction.

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)

Four adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises.

(2)(a)

First Aid boxes were readily available in the corridors and hallway of the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 8 September 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 8 March 2023 and 8 September 2023 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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 were supervised by staff at all times in the pre-school rooms, in the outdoor play area and when using the sanitary accommodation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2024.