

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO003
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Name of Service:	Benbulben Crèche Ltd
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Address of Service:	College Road, Summerhill, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 T384
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maureen Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	42
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Killeen Y Coyne
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

Benbulbin Crèche Ltd. is a privately operated full-day-care service for children aged between 0 and 6 years. The early years' service is registered to provide full day care to children attending the service. The age range of children catered for in the service is from 0 – 6 years of age.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were 7 adults working directly with the children. There was an additional staff member working in the kitchen as a cook. This person was also available to provide lunch cover when required. The manager of the service was available to help in the care rooms when needed. The registered provider participates in the daily operation of the service and was present in the service on the day of inspection. There were 4 students on placement, two of which were present in service.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23 and 27; 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 registered provider, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person to deputise as required. On the day of inspection, the person in charge and the deputy person in charge was on site. The staff rosters indicated that either the register provider or person in charge were always available on the premises when pre-school children were present.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service. This was evidenced through communication with staff and through a review of documentation on site.

(2)

On the day of inspection, 12 adults were present, the registered provider, the person in charge, 7 adults who were employed to work directly with the children. In addition, one adult who was employed as the cook and two students on placement.

The following vetting information was available for 15 adults.

- (a) 14 written validated references from past employers.
- (b) 16 written validated references from reputable sources other than a previous employer
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff and students`. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

11 of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

- Each of the playrooms were well organised and a library area was in place for the children. The area contained soft furnishings the children were observed on the day to relax and read books during playtime.
- The food was prepared in the service and observed to be nutritionally balanced and varied. A three-week menu plan was on display in the entrance hall and provided to the inspectors on the day of the inspection.

The children were observed having their snack which consisted of apples pears bananas toast and yoghurt. A hot meal of chicken Stew was provided to the preschool children in the afternoon and water or milk or made available at all snacks and meals. A three-week menu plan was on display in the entrance hall.

- During meals, the staff member set at the tables and engaged in social conversations with the children which promoted a relaxed atmosphere. Some staff members were observed sitting at the children's level when assisting the younger children to feed themselves.
- Children were brought to the toilet as needed and were assisted by the staff appropriate to their age and stage of development. Nappy changing was conducted regularly and promptly when required as observed by the inspector on the day. Nappy changing was managed in a positive and sensitive manner; staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for one-to-one interaction.
- Staff showed the inspector on the software technology application how they update the child's profile when they have been changed so the parents and the service have a record.
- Child friendly hand washing posters were placed in the toilets to promote correct hand washing. Good general hygiene practises were observed, and staff supervise children when they washed their hands to ensure that this was effectively carried out.
- Bibs and aprons were available to the children for messy play activities, children were observed playing with bubbles, water, sand and mashed up corn flakes.
- Spare clothes/wet gear were available if the children required a change of clothing and were stored in individual plastic boxes outside their room with their photography on them.
- The staff present were observed to be consistent and positive in their interactions with the children. Positive behaviour was encouraged as the staff rewarded good behaviour and children's efforts with praise and acknowledgment. Children were alerted well in advance of transition to new activities such as snack break, tidy up time and outside play.
- The individual sleep needs of the younger children were met on the day of the inspection, standard cots were provided for children under 2 years of age well stackable floor beds were provided for children over the age of two. Soft music was playing to relax the children in the rooms before sleep and the sleep routine was observed to be calm.

Supporting Relationship:

- The aims worker spoke with the inspectors regarding areas of focus and tools in place for any child who requires additional support.
- A key working system was in place in the service with name staff members assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with the designated group of children and their parents within their assigned rooms. The inspectors spoke with one staff member in relation to the key working system in place and she outlined some of her responsibilities in relation to observations, setting up curriculum and activities. This promoted the development and sustainment of relationships between the children, their families, and the staff in the service.
- The children were also observed doing yoga, they were encouraged to lie on the ground and try different breathing techniques which assisted some of the children with regulation.
- Staff and parents work in partnership with the service. There was sufficient information readily available for parents with notice boards in the main entrance and in each of the three playrooms. The service uses a software technology application to provide information to parents with real time information. Staff members can record on the app the children's sleep activities, food intake, nappy changes and any observations throughout the day. Staff also advised the inspector that at pick up and drop off they can verbally communicate with parents if necessary.

Physical and material environment.

- There were dedicated interest areas in each of the rooms which offers stimulation, exploration, and imagination, all materials were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play, and movement.
- The toddler rooms also included a role play kitchen which included pots and pans, a construction area with cars, tractors and trucks. There was a dress up area with lots of different costumes for imaginary play.
- The theme of Easter and spring were evident in the rooms from the different artwork and posters displayed on the walls, there was a nature corner.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor area to include small picnic tables with benches, mud kitchens, sensory table, large shed with Sand pit inside, playhouses, chalkboards, ride on bikes and balancing beams.

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:

- On arrival to the service the external doors were secure to prevent an unauthorised person entering the service and children from exiting the service unnoticed.
- A buzzer system was in place to facilitate admission to the service. All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- Exit routes in all the playrooms were free from any obstruction.
- The children were observed to be actively supervised by staff, while playing in the outside area.
- Internal blinds were safe and fitted correctly and not accessible by the children.
- The kitchen was not accessible to any of the preschool children on the day of the inspection.
- Cleaning Schedules were in place and reviewed.

Infection Control:

- Regular hand washing practises by staff and children were observed. Staff were noted encouraging children to wash their hands before eating, following messy and outdoor play.
- There were disposal paper towels provided to facilitate hand drying by the children dispensers for liquid soap was provided at the wash hand basins.
- Notices of nappy changing procedures were clearly displayed in the nappy changing area. There was a supply of disposable gloves and aprons, Foot operated pedal bins were in use in the nappy changing area.
- The staff were observed disinfecting the nappy changing area after each child was changed.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered on the day of the inspection.
- Suncream was observed to be applied to children by the staff as required due to the hot weather.

Safe Sleep:

- There is a dedicated sleep room available in the service off toddler room 1. On the day of the inspection ten standard cots were available for use in the room.
- Twelve stackable beds were available for the children over the age of two.

- There was a thermometer in each room to measure room temperatures, cooling fans were also in operation on the day of the inspection due to the hot weather.
- Sleep checks were documented by staff on the software technology application used by the service, which included 10-minute observations of the child's position, breathing, breathing pattern and colour. The services application would automatically light up every 10 minutes to alert the staff to conduct the checks.
- There was an adult size chair available in the baby room for adults to sit in the room with children if needed

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills have been conducted, and staff members are familiar with the fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The fire exits were easily recognisable and not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Cleaning supplies were not locked away and were accessible to the pre-school children.

Infection Control:

- The foot bin in the toddler room two was broken, which meant that staff had to use their hands to dispose of waste. This posed a risk of cross contamination to the children

Administration of Medication:

- A sample of medication records reviewed on the day of the inspection did not detail a manager's signature after the administration of medication as per the services medication policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- All cleaning supplies were removed immediately on the day of Inspection and stored in a press which is out of reach of the children. All staff were instructed that cleaning supplies must be stored in a press which is clearly labelled, and which is out of reach of the children. This will be added to our daily check list under Health and Safety.

Infection Control:

- The foot bin in the toddler room was removed and replaced on the day of the inspection. Staff had been advised to inform management of bins that need replacing. Also new spare bins are available at the creche when needed.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were reminded that medical consent forms must be signed by Management. We have updated our medical consent form. All staff have been informed of the changes to the medical consent form. Our Medication policy has been updated to reflect this change.
- Management will do regular checks of the medical consent forms to ensure they are signed and will be part of the agenda for each staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation and photographs were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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

- During the inspection, the required ratio of qualified adults to children was maintained, ensuring each child was supervised by a qualified staff member.
- Staff positioned themselves within the rooms to engage effectively with the children, providing supportive and attentive supervision.
- During mealtimes, staff sat closely with the children at the tables, offering assistance when needed.
- The outdoor area was designed to ensure that children remained within sight and sound of the staff.