

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO067
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Tubbercurry Family & Childcare Centre
-------------------------	---------------------------------------

Address of Service:	Mountain Road, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
----------------------------	---------------------------------------

Eircode:	F91 YR25
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Brendan McCauley
-------------------------------------	------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	12/12/2023
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	14
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo, V94 XT5F.
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello and M Farrell
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

Tubbercurry Family and Childcare Centre is a community based service which has been in operation since 2003. It is located near the town centre of Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo. Full day, part time and sessional care for children from infants to six years of age is offered. The maximum number of preschool children presently catered for is 88 as per the national register, ranging in age from 1 to 6 years. School aged children are catered for also. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00 hours. The facility is located on the ground floor of a two-storey building which is the Family Resource Centre. The pre-school is only accessible via a secure door and is not accessed by people from the rest of the building. There are five care rooms in operation, two dedicated sleep rooms and a large outdoor area.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection, 16 adults were present in the service working within the preschool service. 14 adults worked directly with the children. There was one adult working in the kitchen, one adult in the office and the person in charge.

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 25. 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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2)(a),(b)

The records of ten new staff member and two students employed in the service since the last inspection on the 15 October 2020 were reviewed. Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all of the twelve adults.

- (c) A Garda Vetting disclosure was available for the twelve adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available for four adults employed who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Ten adults recently employed and working directly with the children held a major award at Level 5 or above in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The qualifications for the remaining staff that worked directly with the children had been reviewed on previous inspection and been found to have met the regulatory requirements.

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) There were 14 adults working directly with 61 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Wobbler room: 2 adults cared for 5 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
 - Toddler room: 3 adults cared for 10 children aged 2 years of age.
 - Preschool Fulltime playroom: 3 adults cared for 12 children aged 3 to 5 years of age.
 - Preschool Junior playroom: 3 adults cared for 17 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.
 - Preschool Senior playroom: 3 adults cared for 17 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.
- In the afternoon the adult: child ratios were found to be as follows:
- Wobbler room: 1 adult cared for 2 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Toddler room: 1 adult cared for 3 children aged 2 years of age and 1 child aged 4 years.

Preschool Fulltime playroom: 1 adult cared for 8 children aged 3 to 5 years of age.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample of attendance records reviewed.

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

The service operated a two-week meal plan which provided breakfast, dinner and snacks for the children availing of full day care services. The menu was displayed on a chalkboard in the lobby for parents information. On the day a main meal of beef stew, potato mash and carrots were provided to the children. The morning snack provided by the service included fruit and toast. Children who availed of the sessional service brought in their snack from home and these included wraps, sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts. The snack times were varied in Drinking water was freely available throughout the day and stored on shelving easily accessible to children in all care rooms.

Nappy changing was observed and positive engagement and interaction with the children were observed throughout this process. Nappy changing was observed to be in line with the service nappy changing policy. The older children who were toileting independently were prompted to do so and supervised from a distance.

The sleep needs of the younger children were met. This was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals throughout the day prompted by their cues. Three sleep rooms were in use in the service with standard cots provided for babies and floor beds available for children over two years of age. Sleep was monitored by physical checks from staff member at a minimum of every ten minutes.

The care rooms were laid out to facilitate sensory experiences for the child through arts and crafts and sensory tables. Fine motor development was supported using jigsaws, pins and threading puzzles. Opportunities for imaginary and role play were provided in the home corners and dress up area as well as construction area and farm animal areas. The younger rooms of the wobbler and toddler rooms were resourced with equipment suitable

to the age and stage of development of the young children in these rooms, including home corners, musical instruments, and sensory resources. Equipment was stored on open shelving at children’s heights so that choice could be facilitated. The care rooms had been decorated to celebrate Christmas with artwork the children had made displayed and colourful festive paintings of windows.

The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. The outdoor area provided consisted of different pods all linked together. A courtyard with climbing frames, bikes and trikes provided opportunities for outdoor play in inclement weather as the ground surface provided was of impact absorbing material. Other areas consisted of tunnels, tyres slides, swings ride on toys and bikes and trikes, mud kitchens and playhouses and a grass surface, providing opportunity for children to develop gross motor skills and develop their imagination. The children from the preschool junior and preschool senior room had access to an outdoor shelter with seating used for different play activities. This area was roofed to ensure accessibility in all weathers.

Evidence of the learning curriculum was displayed in information books on entry to care rooms. These books outlined the curriculum goals for the room along with evidence of tasks completed. Individual learning journals were made available to the inspectors where ongoing observations were documented for each child, creating a picture of each child’s learnings. These journals were sent home periodically for parents to view. The journals contained a “Parent’s voice” form where parents were invited to provide feedback to the service.

On the day of inspection, the older children were demonstrating their learnings including songs in the annual Christmas show, where family members had been invited to the preschool to watch the Christmas show performed by their preschoolers. The children celebrated their successes with a party afterwards.

Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care. In the wobbler room, young children were held and cuddled as needed throughout the day. Staff in the wobbler room described how they support new admissions to the service, ensuring a gradual transition plan is implemented to ensure the child settles as well as possible. Similar transition plans take place before the preschool children transition to another care room. The children were encouraged by staff towards independence depending on their age and stage of development. For example, in the Preschool Senior care room, children were encouraged to indicate that they were in attendance in the room by attaching their photograph on the “who is here today” attendance board. There was evidence of good communication between staff members and children, with children given notice before the next activities and clear instruction on the plan of activities throughout the day. A staff information letter was issued monthly to staff containing service information and updates.

The service took measures to promote children’s relationships by displaying pictures of the children’s families in the care room. There was information on the keyworkers systems in place to help develop secure relationships with the children and staff on display in the Preschool care rooms.

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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were three highchairs with harness safety straps fitted in good condition.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were observed to be clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and when interviewed staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had three designated sleep rooms. One sleep room had four standard cots, one contained one cot and five floor beds, and a third sleep room had five floor beds if required.
- The sleep room temperatures measured 19.7°C on the day of inspection which is line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A blue plastic table that was used as a sand table was damaged with cracks in the table and lid resulting in sharp edges that posed a potential safety to risk to children playing with the equipment. It is acknowledged that the table was removed by staff once brought to their attention by an inspector.

Infection Control:

2. A seat in the rest areas of both the Preschool Junior and Preschool Senior care rooms had tears in their covering exposing foam resulting in difficulties with effective cleaning of the equipment posing an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The blue plastic table has been removed from the area. A new wooden sand table has been purchased for the area. The room and outdoor risk assessment has been updated.

Infection Control:

2. The seating area in the preschool junior room and preschool senior room that presented with tears have been removed. New seating has been purchased for this area. The room and outdoor daily risk assessment has been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted in the CAPA by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate. The non compliances found in relation to regulation 23 on inspection have now been rectified and this regulation is now compliant.

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) On the day of inspection two adults trained in First Aid responder (FAR) were available to the children in attending the preschool service.

(2) (a),(b)

The registered provider has ensured that a full stocked first aid kit is stored in a accessible place in the preschool and is available to the preschool children throughout the session.