

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY088				
Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings				
Address of Service:	The Steeples, Dualla Road, Cashel, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E25 PY86				
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne-Marie Ryan				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	11/09/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>40</td> <td>PM</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </table>	AM	40	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.				
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Cullen and N. Thornton				
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

Bright Beginnings is a private early years service which was established in 2009 and offers full day, part time and sessional care service. The service operates 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday. The service located in a detached purpose-built premises off the Dualla road, close to Cashel town centre. There are four early years rooms, a designated sleep room, kitchen and enclosed outdoor area.

Staffing

There are a total of 17 staff working in the service, which includes staff working directly with children, an office administrator, a chef and caretaker. The centre manager was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) - Management and Recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11 (1)(2) - Staffing Levels, 16 (1) - Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 (1) - Health Welfare and Development of the Child, 23 - Safeguarding health,

safety and welfare of child, 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance, 25 - First aid and 26 – Fire safety measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 (1), 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included wobbler, toddler and junior Montessori rooms.

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.

Additional Information

Two immediate action notices were issued to the registered provider on 11 September 2023 arising from the findings on inspection:

1. A mandatory Garda vetting disclosure was not available for two staff members who were employed in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
2. A non-compliance was identified with regulation 23 as a child was observed wearing amber bead jewellery around their neck.

The registered provider submitted a response on 12 September 2023 which outlined the actions they were taking to address the risks identified.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) On the day of inspection, there was a named designated person in charge and a named deputy designated person in charge.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure documented that outlined the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member.

(2)(a) There were two validated references available for each of eight staff members employed in the service from past employers.

There was one validated reference available for each of seven staff members employed in the service from past employers.

(b) There were two validated references available for one staff member and one validated reference available for each of six staff members from reputable sources, in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) There was a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána, available for each of 15 staff members, employed in the service.

(d) Police vetting was available on file, for one staff member who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than six months.

(4) On review of staff records, the inspector observed that each staff member working directly with the children in the service held at least a qualification in early childhood care and education, ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The registered provider was unable to demonstrate that they had taken all required measures during the recruitment of two staff members to ensure that they were suitable and competent as follows:

(a)(b) A second validated reference was not available for one staff member and two validated references were not available for another staff member, who as part of their roles in the service, were working directly with the children.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána, were not available for two staff members, who as part of their roles in the service, were working directly with the children.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not completed in full, for two staff members who had recently commenced working in the service, and as part of their roles, were working directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)
(a)(b) A reference was obtained by the service for one staff member, the second staff member is no longer employed by the service. The designated person will ensure this process is completed prior to any new employees starting.

(c) Garda vetting was returned for one staff member, the other staff member is no longer employed by the service. The designated person will ensure this process is completed prior to any new employees starting.

(3) The designated person will ensure these processes are completed prior to any new employees starting.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(a)(b) Reference for one staff member.

(c) Evidence of application for Garda vetting for both staff members was submitted in response to the IAN on 12 September. Garda vetting was subsequently submitted for one staff member.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On review of documentation, the inspector observed that the written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 and required for a full day care service, were available in the service and open for inspection. Policies were observed to contain the relevant information specific to each policy.

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 were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children at all times. There were 40 children with 7 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection. The manager and an additional staff member were available to provide cover in each room as necessary throughout the day.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the wobbler room, there were 5 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In the toddler room, there were 10 children aged 1.5 to 2.5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the junior Montessori room, there were 12 children aged 2.5 years to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the senior Montessori room, there were 13 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(k) The registered provider developed, maintained and appropriately stored the following relevant documents and records required in the service: (a) staff records, (b) the type of service and the age profile of the children, that the service is registered to provide, (c) details of the adult: child ratios in each classroom within the service, (d) the programme of care provided in the service, (e) the facilities available, (f) the opening hours and fees of the service, (g) the policies, procedures, and statements that the service is required under Regulation 10, (h) each child's daily attendance details, (i) staff rosters, (j) administration of medication records and (k) accident and incident records, involving ant early years children attending the service.

A sample of the records reviewed by the inspector were observed to be completed in full, with the relevant details recorded.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and a positive regard. They sat with children in small groups or individually, engaged in conversation with and listened attentively to the children as they spoke. An example of this was observed as a staff member sat with a child and read a book chosen by them, other children organically joined the spontaneous story time. Staff were also observed to engage in a fun active song

and rhyme time with the toddler group. Children enthusiastically engaged in a ‘hop little bunnies’ action song. Children were provided with the choice to partake in the activity or engage in self-directed play.

Parent and guardian communication during collection and drop off periods, provided an opportunity for staff to share information with parents. Additional methods of communication such as phone calls, text messages and the individual communication books were used to share information between home and the service.

The wobbler room had been developed since the last inspection. Additional low level open shelves offer free access to materials and resources, promoting independence and choice making. The variety of natural and manufactured materials used in the room promoted exploration. A wall mounted sensory board and sensory boxes offered opportunity for inquiry.

(b)
Sleep was child led and staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure consistency between home and service routines. Children were placed to sleep when signs of tiredness were recognised by staff, this was observed in both the wobbler and toddler rooms when children were placed to sleep as required during the day. Low-level floor beds were available to meet the sleep needs of children over 2 years of age. The sleep room and junior Montessori room were sufficiently dark to promote a restful sleep.

All snacks and meals were prepared onsite by the service chef. A varied three-week menu was available, and all allergens listed. Extra portions were available if required. Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves. Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and interactions between staff and children during the process were warm and playful. Children who were toilet trained, were supported to use the toilet independently.

Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. An outdoor rota was displayed in each room and children from each room were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The toddler room was not a suitable sleep environment for the three children observed sleeping. There was direct light from the windows and no measures had been taken to provide ambient lighting in the room to promote a restful sleep.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Blackout blind has been ordered for window beside sleep area in Toddler Room. This will be used during sleep time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Receipt for blind.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Implementation will be assessed on next inspection.

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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. Children attending the Montessori rooms were collected from a second entrance door which was secured throughout the inspection. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children, doors were locked or safety gates restricted access. All cleaning agents were stored safely in high level shelves and out of reach of children.

All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. The outdoor play area was maintained to a good standard and free from hazards. Warm water used by children for handwashing was thermostatically controlled and maintained below 43°C. The temperature was recorded at 30.2°C in the main toilet block.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and liquid soap.

During nappy changing processes observed staff ensured gloves and disposable aprons were worn. There were designated coloured aprons for use by each individual room. Staff cleaned the nappy changing unit after each use and foot pedal operated bins were available for disposal of waste.

Bodily fluid spill kits were available in the hall area for use as an infection control measure if required. Cots and low-level beds observed in use were spaced the required 50cm apart.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. A staff member remained in the toddler and junior Montessori rooms while children were sleeping on low-level beds. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each area used for sleep. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 21.7°C, which was within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one. Staff were familiar with the service sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room. New mattresses and waterproof mattress protectors had been purchased since the last inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One child was observed to be wearing amber bead jewellery around their neck. This item posed a potential risk of injury to children through choking or inhalation. An immediate action notice was issued to the service 11 September 2023.
2. One window safety catch in the junior Montessori room was broken; this posed a potential risk of injury to a child should they climb near the window.

Infection Control:

3. The services nappy changing policy was not implemented effectively to prevent the spread of infection in the service. Staff did not consistently wash their own or children's hand after nappy changes.

4. The mattress protector on one mattress did not fit correctly and foam from the mattress was exposed. This posed a risk choking as a child could potentially break off exposed foam. A potential risk of cross contamination was also posed as effective cleaning could not be completed between uses by multiple children. This non-compliance was previously identified on inspection on 14 September 2022.
5. Low level beds used by children in the toddler and junior Montessori rooms were not cleaned between uses by individual children. Additionally, no bed linen was used under the children. Children were observed lying directly on the canvas bed increasing the risk of cross contamination.
6. Two bins in the junior Montessori room were unlidded and two bins in the senior Montessori room were broken. This may lead to cross contamination; foot pedal operated lidded bins are required to address this risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The amber bead necklace was removed after the service consulted with the child's parents on the day of inspection. Parent have been reminded that amber beads are not permitted and all future parents will be informed of this prior to their child attending the service.
2. The safety latch has been replaced. Staff members will inform management/maintenance of any window safety devices that need to be replaced, and this will be completed immediately.

Infection Control:

3. All staff reminded of this at staff meeting on Tuesday 03 October 2023. Staff members will wash their hands and children's hands after every nappy change.
4. Mattress protector replaced. All staff members have been reminded to be extra vigilant in checking mattress protectors when putting children down for their sleep.
5. Fitted sheets have been purchased and are being used on camp beds. Fitted sheets will be used on all camp beds going forward.
6. New bins have been purchased. Staff members will inform management/maintenance of any bins that need to be replaced, and this will be completed immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Communication issued to parents.
2. Photograph of new safety latch.

Infection Control:

3. Evidence of communication to all staff members.
4. Photograph of mattress protector.
5. Photograph of low-level bed with fitted sheet.
6. Photograph of bins.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
Implementation will be assessed on next inspection.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) In discussion with staff in each of the four early years rooms, staff demonstrated that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service daily. There was recorded evidence by staff of the date, time of each child's arrival and departure, and the name of the individual that dropped or collected the child to and from the service.

Staff provided specific information to the inspector demonstrating that this procedure was in line with the service's "Checking In and Out and Recording of Attendance policy" and "Dropping Off and Collection of Children policy".

(3)(a) During the inspection the inspector observed that no person other than those mentioned in (3)(a)(i) to (iv) could enter the service without their entry being approved by a staff member. At all times there was an administrator in the reception area and a keypad entry system ensured that all visitors to the service had to ring a call bell system.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(b) There was no record maintained of the entry of any person other than those mentioned in (3)(a)(i) to (iv).

The inspectors were not requested to sign any visitors record/ book upon entering the service.

(4) There was no evidence of any records referred to in (3)(b) having been retained in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Visitors book now in place and will be used for each visitor going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of visitors book.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Implementation will be assessed on next inspection.

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 review of staff files, there was evidence that there were three staff members employed in the service with current first aid responder (FAR) training certificates. Two staff members with FAR training were onsite during the inspection. The designated person in charge, demonstrated with evidence provided by the staff roster, that there was always a staff member with FAR training onsite, during the operation hours of the service.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored on a mobile trolley next to reception, where all staff members could access it, when required.
- (b) The first aid box was always available, with the contents checked by staff monthly, as demonstrated by records maintained.

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) On review of the service's fire records, the inspector observed that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 06 June 2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in each early years room and in the reception area. A fire assembly point was clearly signposted outside, in the carpark.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) While it is acknowledged that a record of maintenance was available for the fire-fighting equipment, which was recorded as having been serviced in October 2022, there was no service record available for the smoke alarm system.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (b) A booking has been made with an alarm company for the servicing of the smoke alarm system.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

16 October 2023: Communication with smoke alarm servicing contractor.

18 October 2023: Service record for completed works.

Summary Comment

The requirements of Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 have been met.