

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY100				
Name of Service:	Clonmel Childcare				
Address of Service:	Love Lane, Cashel Court, Cashel Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E91 A279				
Name of Registered Provider:	Sean O'Mahoney				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	24/10/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>76</td> <td>PM</td> <td>59</td> </tr> </table>	AM	76	PM	59
AM	76	PM	59		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.				
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Cullen and L. McGeeney				
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

Clonmel Childcare is a full day care service located in the urban setting of Clonmel town, Co. Tipperary. Full day care, part-time and sessional care programmes are provided for children aged 0 to 6 years old. The service operates Monday to Friday, 07:30 – 18:00 hours, 52 weeks of the year. A sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is also offered 38 weeks of the year, 09:00-12:00 hours. This two storey purpose-built premises has four early years rooms on the ground floor, three early years rooms and a multipurpose room on the first floor and a prefabricated modular unit to the rear of the main building. A registered school aged service is also provided onsite. The service is part of the Best Creche group which operates in Tipperary, Cork and Kerry.

Staffing

The service currently employs 29 staff members which includes the service manager, assistant manager, supervisors, room leaders, early years practitioners, child care workers and ancillary staff including a cleaner, maintenance worker and financial advisor. 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9– Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(2) – Staffing levels, 16 (1) - Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 (1)(a)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 First Aid and 26 - Fire safety measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the baby, wobbler, toddler one and two and butterfly 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.

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

(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

The files of the 29 staff employed in the service were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(2)(a) A minimum of 2 written references were available for each member of staff. Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of 27 members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of four members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were held on file. The service had a process in place by which Garda vetting was renewed every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 76 children with 15 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and during the afternoon there were 59 children with 11 staff members. Additional staff members including the designated person in charge and supervisor were available to cover staff breaks and assist where required.

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

- In the baby room, there were 3 children aged 10 to 14 months old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In the wobbler room, there were 5 children aged 16 to 18 months old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In toddler room one, there were 10 children aged 18 to 24 months old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In toddler room two, there were 9 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the ladybird room, there were 5 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In the bumble bee room, there were 17 children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the butterfly room, there were 16 children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- The caterpillar room, there were 11 children aged 2 years 8 months 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) The records and documents required under subsections (a) to (k) of this regulation were available in the service. Information about the staff, the service, policies, procedures and statements was available in folders on open shelves in the entrance lobby where they could be accessed by parents of children attending the service. Duplicate books were available for recording the administration of medication and any accidents or incidents that occurred in the service. Staff rosters and child attendance records were maintained on an electronic system to which all of the staff had access.

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-

(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

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 baby and wobbler rooms when children were placed to sleep as required during the day. Children in both toddler rooms and the ladybird room had a scheduled sleep time after dinner at 12:00pm. Adjoining sleep rooms were available if sleep was required outside of this time. Each area used for sleep was sufficiently dark to promote a restful sleep and allow appropriate supervision of children while sleeping.

A three-week menu detailed the snacks which were prepared onsite. A monthly menu from an outside catering company was available for the main hot meal and all allergens listed. On the day of inspection the meal served was a Mediterranean pasta. Extra portions and alternatives were available if required to meet dietary preferences and needs. Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves. Children were observed to retrieve drinks independently throughout the day. 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.

Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. The outdoor space was divided into two large areas. Both toddler rooms, baby and wobbler rooms had access directly from their classroom. An outdoor rota was available for children on the first floor of the building. Children were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day. Appropriate clothing was available for all children to access the outdoor area in all weathers.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Children who were toilet trained, were supported to use the toilet independently and handwashing was promoted after both nappy changing and toileting. Attention was given to children's appearance with staff observed to clean children's faces and hands, bibs were provided for younger children at

mealtimes. Tissues and wet wipes were available for children to attend to their own personal care needs in the older classrooms.

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 and side access gates to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents and hazards were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed. All highchairs, tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them, for example small items which may pose a risk of choking were not observed in room occupied by younger children. The outdoor play areas were maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Hinge guard protectors were in place on all door which posed a risk of injury to children. Both staircases were well lit with suitable nonslip surfaces and low-level handrails for children.

Room temperatures were monitored in each room by staff, temperatures were maintained between the required 18°C to 22°C in the early years rooms. Warm water used by children for handwashing was thermostatically controlled and maintained below 43°C.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules completed daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating and after toileting and nappy changing. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Each room had designated children's toilets and/or a nappy changing area. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and liquid soap.

A system was in place for the appropriate storage and sterilisation of children's soothers in each of the junior rooms. Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children and appropriate safe food storage and preparation was observed.

During nappy changing processes observed, staff adhered to the services nappy changing policy which was on display. Staff ensured that gloves and aprons were worn during the nappy changing process and both child and staff hands were washed after nappy changing had taken place.

All cots and low-level beds observed in use were spaced the required 50cm apart. Cots which were shared between children had waterproof mattress protectors and bedlinen was changed between children to prevent cross-infection. Children in the baby room each has an assigned cot for their individual use.

Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service. Staff members were familiar with the processes involved in administering medication and the records confirmed the dosage, route and times of administration. All records reviewed were signed by two staff members and parent/guardians. Secure storage locations had been identified for medications supplied by parents.

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. Staff members remained in the sleeping areas while children were sleeping on low-level beds. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each sleep room. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy and safe sleep guidelines which were displayed in each of the four sleep rooms. The baby and wobbler sleep room temperatures were recorded between 19.8°C – 20.0°C, which was within the required temperature ranges.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

Signed consent forms were not available for the administration of medication. It is acknowledged that consent for emergency medication was sought on enrolment and a record of administration was available for medications recently administered to children in the service.

Safe Sleep:

Nine children under the age of two years in toddler room one, were observed sleeping on low-level stackable beds. Children under the age of two should have access to a cot or appropriate floor bed with a mattress of no less than 6cm in depth.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

Signed consent forms prior to administration of medication are on file and all staff have been informed to revert back to using these consents forms. They must be fill out and sign by parents prior to administration of medication. This form will be in use going forward.

Safe Sleep:

Ten new floor beds have been purchased. These floor beds are age appropriate for children under two years and will be in our toddler one room. These will be used going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Administration of medication consent form.

Safe Sleep:

Receipt of purchase of floor beds.

Summary Comment

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

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) There were sufficient staff members trained in first aid available to the children to cover the hours of operation of the service. Almost all of the staff held current certification in first aid response (FAR), valid until 2024.

(2)(a)(b) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in multiple easily accessible locations throughout the 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 fire fighting 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) There was a record of monthly fire drills which had taken place in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 29 September 2023.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 13 December 2022 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 20 September 2023.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed beside each emergency exit door on the premises.