

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD019
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Name of Service:	Co. Waterford Child Care Centre T/A Le Chéile
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Address of Service:	T/A Le Chéile, Mitchell Street, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X35 DE98
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eleanor McGrath
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	6 July 2023
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Date 2 of Inspection:	7 July 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	78	PM	36
Day 2	AM	72	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan and C Ryan
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

Le Chéile is a community childcare service established in January 2009. It is a full day care service located in the grounds of the Presentation Community Development Centre in Dungarvan town Co Waterford. The service is purpose built and located on the ground floor accommodating eight childcare rooms, a full catering kitchen, two nappy changing rooms and a laundry room. There are separate storage rooms for prams and buggies, toys and equipment, and chemical cleaning agents. The outdoor play areas are adjacent to the childcare rooms. The service is presently open from Monday to Friday between 08:30hrs and 17:15hrs catering for children from 1 to 5 years of age.

Staffing

Le Chéile is managed by a voluntary management committee. The service employs a general manager, a service coordinator and 31 childcare staff, a part time chef and caretaker.

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 safety of the child.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2), 19(a,) 23, 25(1)(2), 26(1)(4).

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-

- (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) On the day of the inspection there was a manager who was the designated person in charge for the service was available.
- (b) The designated person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was documentation that demonstrated the management structure for the service which identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service. The service was observed to be well managed, and this was reflected in the managers extensive working knowledge of all aspects of the service.
- ((2)(a)(b)
- There were two validated references available on file for each staff member.
- (c) All 33 staff files were reviewed for updated Garda vetting disclosures. There was evidence that Garda vetting disclosures from An Garda Síochána had been updated for all the staff employed to work with the children in the past three years.
- (d) Police vetting certificates were required for two staff who had lived and worked outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than six months were available for inspection.
- (4) There was evidence that all staff employed in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or equivalent 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The designated person in charge ensured that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children throughout the operational hours of the service.

(2) On the morning of day one of the inspection 6 July 2023 there were 78 early years children directly supervised by 19 staff members.

Wobbler room: 12 children and 4 staff.

Toddler room: 9 children and 3 staff.

Jellyfish room: 15 children and 3 staff.

Starfish room: 16 children and 3 staff.

Dolphin room: 14 children and 2 staff.

Sharks room: 13 Children and 3 staff.

Cruisers room: closed.

Maud's room: closed.

During the afternoon, of day one of the inspection 6 July 2023 there were 36 early years children directly supervised by 13 staff members. The numbers were as follows:

Wobbler room: 12 children and 4 staff.

Toddler room: 9 children and 3 staff.

Cruisers room: 15 children and 3 staff.

Starfish room: 16 children and 3 staff.

Dolphin room: closed.

Sharks room: closed.

Jellyfish room: closed.

Maud's room: closed.

One additional staff was present and assisting across the rooms.

On the morning of day two of the inspection 7 July 2023 there were 72 early years children directly supervised by 18 staff members.

Wobbler room: 8 children and 3 staff.

Toddler room: 10 children and 3 staff.

Jellyfish room: 15 children and 3 staff.

Starfish room: 14 children and 3 staff.

Dolphin room: 11 children and 3 staff.

Sharks room: 14 Children and 3 staff.

Cruisers room: closed.

Maud's room: closed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to providing the care needs and activities for the children attending the service.

Dinner was served between 12:15 to 13:15 hours on the first day; children ate fish fingers, mashed potatoes and beans. A weekly menu plan was displayed. A snack of crackers and cheese was given in the afternoon. Within the rooms, children's bottles were set out and freely available to the children to help themselves.

The wobbler room had a designated dining area sectioned off from the main playroom. The children were observed enjoying the routine built around the main meal. This involved children firstly washing their hands at a sink provided in the corner of the area and then finding their own table assisted by a large, laminated photograph of themselves. The child's excitement and sense of delight was observed when they found their own photograph. Staff were observed encouraging the children to feed themselves if they could and gave help if required.

Children were supported to engage positively with each other, and minor disputes were dealt with in a constructive manner. All staff were observed to be consistent in their approach to interrupting any behavioural issues by reminding the children of "kind hands" followed by distraction, encouragement and a reminder to "be nice to our friends."

Staff duties in both the wobbler and toddler rooms were divided into specific tasks, these were documented for the week. This system was observed to work well in the rooms which supported clarity of responsibilities and fostered teamwork between the staff.

Communication books were available for each child under two years of age. These books went home on a daily basis in the child's bag, it was observed that parents used these books to communicate with the staff by including additional relevant information about the child's home life.

Both the wobbler and toddler rooms responded to the children's individual sleeping patterns which were observed to be child led in sleep rooms adjacent to each care room. Children were observed being put down to sleep when tired.

All childcare rooms on the premises provided adequate space to move about freely with the additional use of the wide corridor spaces if required when the weather did not permit going outdoors. On the day of inspection, the double doors in the wobbler and toddler rooms were kept open so that children could move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments.

Children in the jellyfish room were engaged in circle time on the inspectors' arrival. Children chatted to the inspector, telling her what they had planned for the morning, which included painting and going outside.

After circle time, children washed their hands and enjoyed their mid-morning snack. Photographs were used as visual prompts to support children with transitioning between activities, focusing on first and then.

Children in the Starfish room were enjoying playing with playdough. Children who didn't wish to play with the playdough were observed to engage in alternative play around the room. The staff moved around the room, sitting, playing and chatting with the children. Staff were observed to calmly and sensitively manage a child who was upset and required assistance in the bathroom.

Children in the sharks and dolphin rooms were observed to use the toilet independently and needed only prompting with handwashing. Parents collected children directly from the room which allowed staff to give verbal feedback on their child's day. Children were familiar with the daily routine; children seen transitioning between activities independently.

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:

Both external doors had a keypad coding security system for entry. The outdoor play areas were safe and securely surrounded with high timber fencing which separated it from the neighbouring residential area. Attendance records were fully maintained by the staff in each room, including details of the person who dropped and collected each child. A high cupboard in the kitchen was nominated for the safe storage of prescribed medicines.

Cleaning agents were stored in a separate locked cleaning storeroom inaccessible to children. Radiators throughout the service were thermostatically controlled to ensure the surface temperature was safe for children. Finger guards were fitted to doors that children had access to, to avoid finger injuries.

Infection Control:

There was a policy on the cleaning of mouthed toys and soothers. The inspector observed the protocol for managing this, all soothers were labeled with the child's name and sent home in sealed containers in the child's bag. These containers were also labeled. Good handwashing within the service observed with the children and staff.

Administration of Medication:

There was a written policy and protocols available for the administration of prescribed medications within the service. No child was on any medication in any of the rooms on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

Each child under two years of age had a cot nominated solely for their rest and sleep needs during the day. All children over two had their own individual stackable bed. The rooms had openable windows that were kept open during the day that ensured that there was adequate circulation of air throughout the sleep room while children were sleeping. Room temperatures were maintained around 20°C.

Graphic posters on safe sleep practices were displayed on the doors of each sleep room that acted as a reminder for staff when putting children down to rest. Staff who spoke with the inspector were aware of safe sleep practices, for example, how often a sleeping child is checked and, records of the checks and the optimal sleep room temperature.

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

Compliance Information

(1)
Twelve of the staff employed to work in the service had current First Aid Responder Training for children. The registered provider stated that at least four staff trained in first aid were available at all times during the operational hours of the service.

(2)
(a) Each childcare room had a suitably equipped first aid box stored on a high shelf out of children's reach.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 16 June 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced in April 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced in June 2023.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details of the measures to be taken in the event of a fire were displayed in each childcare room.