

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD026		
Name of Service:	Home From Home		
Address of Service:	36 Williamstown Glen, Waterford City, Waterford		
Eircode:	X91 YE28		
Name of Registered Provider:	Olivia Hogan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	04/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM 24
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year Services, Waterford Local Health Office Cork Road, Waterford City.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		
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

Home from Home is a detached two storey full day care service located in a private housing estate in the suburbs of Waterford city. The service is privately owned and managed under the present provider since 2007. The age range of children catered for is 6 months to 5 years of age. The opening hours are from 08:45 to 17:45, Monday to Friday. The service offers a programme for school age children. The service has 4 early years rooms and can provide for a maximum of 42 children at any one given time

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner/manager is part of the staff compliment and employs 11 childcare staff all of whom hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,17,19,23,25,26.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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) The registered provider was a designated person in charge and the service had two named designated staff who were able to deputise, as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection both the registered provider was on the premises.

(c) There was documentation available that indicated the management structure of the service and identified the lines of authority, accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee in the service.

On review of the files of the five new staff members who had joined the service since the last inspection, the following was observed.

(2)(a) Written past employee references were available in respect of staff working in the service with recorded validations of each reference.

(b) Written past references were available from reputable sources in the case of a person for whom past employee references were not available.

(c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána which were on file in respect of the five new staff working directly with the children in the service.

(d) Police vetting certificates were not required, as no new staff member working in the service had lived outside of the jurisdiction.

(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 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The registered provider had compiled all of the policies, procedures and statements required under Schedule 5 of the Childcare act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The policies and procedures were available in folders and were clear, relevant and specific to the service. All the policies had been updated and signed by the staff. A condensed version of the policies and procedures was available in a parent handbook, and the registered provider informed the inspector that this was emailed to parents prior to children commencing in the service.

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 registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service. On the day of inspection, at all times in all rooms the staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for the Childcare (Early Years Services) regulations 2016.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection there were 22 children with 7 staff directly supervising them.

On the afternoon of the inspection there were 24 children being directly cared for by 7 staff. The registered provider was supernumerary and was available to help out as required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

All information required under the Regulation 16(1) (a to g): for parents or guardians of children proposing to attend the service were available in the parents handbook as well as information on the main entrance notice board such as staff details. The registered provider informed the inspector, that all parents or guardians were provided with this information on their child's enrolment and signed a parental agreement to confirm that they agreed to the procedures of the service.

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) The following observations and discussions with staff reflect the children's experience within the service focusing on the area of basic needs and programme of activities and its implementation on the day of inspection.

BASIC NEEDS:

Parents were required to provide all food for consumption by the children in the service. Breakfast was given before 09:00 hours on request of parents and guardians. Snack times were at 10:00 and 15:00 hours and the main meal was served at 12:00 hours. On the day of the inspection the children were observed at snack time eating toast, cheese, yogurts and fresh fruit. For the children remaining in the service for full day care, hot meals brought from home such as shepherd's pie, chicken pasta dishes, cheese and ham sandwiches with salad were observed. Drinking water was available in the rooms and age-appropriate feeding and eating utensils were also available. At mealtimes, the staff were observed sitting with the children encouraging them to eat their food.

There was a nappy changing room on the premises. Nappy changing was observed being attended to as required throughout the day. The older children were observed being brought to the toilets at their request with the supervision of a staff member.

There were two sleep rooms adjacent to the toddler room, both were observed to be used in accordance with children's individual sleeping patterns and needs. Each child was observed to have the sole use of a cot or low bed. All care rooms had designated rest areas with soft furnishings, children were observed using these areas for the purpose of relaxation during the day.

Personal items were supplied by the parents such as nappies/change of clothes/wellingtons/wet gear/slippers. Children had personalised hooks and cubbies for the storage of these items children were also observed to be able to access these independently.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND IT'S IMPLEMENTATION.

The registered provider informed the inspector that the programme was play based and incorporated some aspects of a Montessori curriculum. It was documented in the service's curriculum policy that the service recognises how important high-quality early childhood experiences can be in children's lives. The registered provider informed the inspector that the curriculum in Home from Home aimed to encourage active learning through creativity and socialization. This was evidenced by the fact that both the care rooms and the outdoor play space were clearly zoned, and well-resourced to offer varied experiences and a variety of challenges in the children's play.

The registered provider noted and informed the inspector that since the Covid pandemic period it became apparent to establish a sensory rich outdoor learning environment to support a holistic programme. This was evidenced by the new covered sheltered outdoor room that facilitated children spending as much time as possible of their day outdoors. As observed on the day, long periods of the children's play time were spent outdoors.

Children were observed to be actively engaged in the well-used busy mud kitchen corner with large supplies of real-life stainless-steel pots and utensils. Three children were busy mixing mud and informed the inspector that they were making chocolate cakes.

Other opportunities made available were a large planting table, a generous sand box, and numerous child height built in sensory baths. One child was noted to have found a snail and was observed caring for the snail by picking some lettuce from the planting box while staff encouraged her to observe and be gentle with the snail.

Weekly curriculum planning sheets were displayed and observed in all the rooms. Each room offered different opportunities and experiences depending on the age stage and development of the children. The daily routine accommodated a balance between staff and child-initiated activities. Some Easter/ Spring theme-based activities were observed such as the crafting of easter cards for parents. One Corner of the Montessori room upstairs was setup as a farm with real fencing, straw, a trough, green matting for the meadow area, and pictures of animals and their young.

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 service has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending:

Both external doors had a keypad coding security system for entry. The outdoor play area was safe and securely surrounded with high concrete walls separating it from the neighbouring housing estate. There were no hazards found in any of the outdoor play areas.

Attendance records were completed daily for the staff and for the children attending each pod. Cleaning agents were stored in a separate locked cleaning storeroom inaccessible to children. Both kitchens were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy outlined the appropriate exclusion period recommended for childhood infections. Child friendly prompts with picture instructions for hand washing was displayed on walls in all the toilet areas. Suitable cleaning chemicals for disinfection purposes were provided for the playroom and sanitary accommodation.

Hand washing facilities were provided in the children’s childcare room. Foot pedal bins were available at various locations on the premises.

Administration of Medication:

There was a written policy and protocols available for the administration of prescribed medications within the service. High cupboards in the kitchens were nominated for the safe storage of prescribed medicines if required for the children.

Safe Sleep:

Both sleep rooms had openable windows that were observed to be kept open during the day. Room temperatures were maintained around 19-20°C. There were wall mounted thermometers and black out blinds in each sleep room. The blind cords were kept short and secured with a safety device on the wall of the window reveal. Posters on safe sleep practices were displayed in each sleep room. Staff were observed checking the children while sleeping. These checks were recorded every 10 minutes. Two children were observed in a comfortable sleep during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The nappy changing unit had built in pull-out steps. However, these steps were unable to be opened fully due to the wooden encasement for water pipes. Therefore, as the pull-out steps could not be fully opened children could not safely mount the steps of the nappy changing unit for nappy changing.

Infection Control:

The hot water tap at the wash hand basin in the nappy changing room was leaking and broken and was proving difficult to turn off and on.

General Safety:

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in the response on the 16 May 2023 that the builder redirected the wastepipe in order for the steps of the nappy changing unit to extend fully down and thereby allowing children to safely mount these steps for nappy changing.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in the response on 8 May 2023 that tap was repaired and washers replaced. The tap no longer drips and is now easier to turn on and off.

Evidence Submitted

On 18 May 2023 the registered provider submitted photographic and video evidence demonstrating the corrective actions for the plumbing issue and the problems with the nappy changing table.

Summary Comment

The requirements for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 had been met.

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)
An adequate number of staff employed to work in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained. The registered provider ensured that at all times there were two of these trained staff available on the premises.

- (2)
- (a) There was a first aid box in both the upstairs and downstairs kitchen.
 - (b) These first aid boxes were suitably equipped, well stocked and available at all times.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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 recording system was provided to ensure a monthly record was maintained of fire drills as conducted and it was noted that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 22 March 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 February 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 9 January 2023.
 - (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the notice board in the main hall which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.