

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD028
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Name of Service:	It's A Childs Life
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Address of Service:	Barron Hall, Chapel Road, Stradbally, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X42 Y398
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth Crowley
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Service type:	Part-time
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Date of Inspection:	17/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. 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
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Description of service

It's a Child's Life is a private sessional early years service in a community building set up since September 2011, located in mid-county Waterford in a rural coastal village. The service offers part-time care from 09:00hrs to 14:00hrs Monday to Friday and participates in Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs. The premises is the property of the local catholic church and is used by other community organisations. The service has sole use of the hall in the morning, with dedicated sanitary accommodation, kitchen and storage rooms. An area used for outdoor play is located directly behind the building with access from the premises.

Staffing

The service is managed by the registered provider and is part of the staff compliment. A further three part-time staff are employed in the service.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 9 - Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11- Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 29 - Premises.

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 co-operation 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*

(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, as far as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than six 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 the designated person in charge and had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the registered provider and designated person in charge were on the premises

(2)

There was no change in the registered provider or with any of the staff since the last inspection. All vetting documentation was compliant on review at the last inspection.

(c) There was evidence that all four staff members employed to work with the children in the service had their four Garda vetting disclosures updated over the last 18 months.

(d) A Police vetting certificate was available as required for one staff member who had lived and worked outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than six months.

(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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

In the morning session of the inspection, there were 15 children, 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age, being cared for by 3 staff. In the afternoon on the day of the inspection there were 10 children, 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff.

(3)

The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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

(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

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

The service had moved from the large main hall of the parish centre to a purpose-built childcare room at the rear of this premises. This new childcare room was designated for the sole use of the early years service. Since September, the operational hours of the service were extended to 14:00hrs. The room was observed to be comfortable, pleasant and tastefully decorated with examples of Halloween themed children's paintings on the day, a small group of children were observed making Halloween crafts.

The registered provider had developed and implemented a play-based programme with an emphasis on festivals and the seasons that followed the calendar year. Child directed free play was observed on the day of the inspection and the registered provider stated that the ethos of the service was to support and promote children's learning through play and craftwork.

Children were observed to have ample space to move about the room and engage in the areas of their choice. Many of the children were attracted to the well-stocked kitchen/home area with children's kitchen play materials and the large reading/relaxation area with comfortable soft matting and age-appropriate books.

A suitable, safe and secure outdoor space was provided directly at the rear of the premises solely for the early years children and there was direct access to it from the new childcare room. On the day, the children remained

indoors as there was an orange weather warning with intermittent heavy rain, however the service had the use of the large main hall, this was observed to be used twice during the service hours. at 11:30hrs and again at 13:30hrs. In the hall the staff facilitated and encouraged physical activities such as running and jumping games and dancing to music, staff joined in dancing with the children for the movement songs.

The atmosphere in the service was friendly and welcoming and the interactions between the children and staff were observed to be familiar and relaxed. The registered provider reflected on how the group were beginning to bond and little friendships between children were beginning to emerge.

Lunch time was observed to be sociable as the tables were pushed together and the children and staff sat around them. Snacks observed were sandwiches, cheese, crackers, and fresh fruit such as bananas, strawberries and grapes. Hand washing was observed by all children and staff prior to snack time. Childrens independence was nurtured as observed by the encouragement they got to arrange their food on plates after removing it from wrapping and lunch boxes.

The second food snack of the day at 13:00hrs was observed to be unrushed and children were observed chatting about their lunches among themselves, while the staff ate their own lunches with them. Drinking water was available and accessible on a small table, children were observed pouring their drinks independently.

Ten children remained for the extended hours. Staff engaged in conversations with the children, listened to their questions and responded to requests. Two large sand trays were set up in the hall to facilitate the children's requests to play with sand play.

There was a monthly newsletter available for all parents in digital and hard copy. The latest addition (October) explained the family wall and how children were enjoying learning about each other's families and pets, as well as the forth coming Halloween party. The newsletter also had a reminder for parents whose children remained for part time care that the facilities were available to reheat food along with some ideas for this such as, soups and left over dinners.

Children's behaviour was managed in a respectful manner. Staff stated that a small number of children were still settling into the service and minor disputes over toys were observed being handled by the staff with gentle and

appropriate intervention. One staff member was observed by removing the child and using techniques of distraction and redirection.

The daily routine was flexible, and child led, and the timetable was displayed at children's eye level in a photographic format. A comprehensive handbook was available for parents giving an overview of the policies and procedures for the service. The registered provider informed that all parents had received a copy of this prior to children starting in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e)
There was an adequate supply of toilets and wash hand basins for the new childcare room in the parish centre.

Non-Compliance Information

The two new child sized toilets for use by the early years service were not divided or partitioned resulting in the privacy and dignity of a child being compromised and the potential for infection control. The registered provider stated that the partitions and doors were bought and they were waiting for the builder to install these.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response that the toilet divider has been fitted and is working very well with the children. It is providing privacy and dignity for the children while also preventing the risk of cross infection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted of the new toilet divides was submitted on the 7 November 2023.

Summary Comment

The photographs submitted are appropriate to address the non compliance of regulation 29(e) therefore requirements for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 have been met.