

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD064		
Name of Service:	Play Together Creche		
Address of Service:	4 Carn Glas Court, Gracedieu, Waterford City, Waterford		
Eircode:	X91 KC8P		
Name of Registered Provider:	Rebekah Donnelly		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	13/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM 19
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, 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

Play Together Creche at Cairn Glas Court is a privately owned and managed full day care service which has operated under present ownership since September 2011. The premises was built in 2003 and is located on the outskirts of Waterford City and is part of a residential complex. The age range of children catered for is from 6 months to 3 years of age. The opening hours are from 08:00 hrs to 17:30hrs Monday to Friday. The service is purpose built on the ground floor of an apartment block, and has three care rooms presently in operation, two nappy changing areas, two dedicated sleep rooms, a full catering kitchen, office and cleaning store. The outdoor play space is adjacent to the service and has direct access from the toddler care room.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner, and the service is run by family members. The service currently employs 13 childcare staff all of whom hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education to level 5 or 6, with two staff awarded to level 8.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,19,20 and 22.

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, 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.

(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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person able to deputise as required.

(b)

At all times during the inspection both the registered provider and deputy designated person in charge were 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 and unpaid worker in the service.

On review of files of the three 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 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 three new staff working directly with the children in the service.
 - (d) Police vetting certificates were not required as no new staff member had lived outside of the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months after the age of 18.

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 systematically organised into folders and were clear, relevant and specific to Play Together Creche. All the policies had been updated in February 2023 and confirmation was available that the staff had reviewed the latest version of these policies.

The policies reviewed on the day of inspection were as follows:

Health and Nutrition Policy

This policy outlined the meal requirements for children attending the service throughout the day as well as a weekly menu plan for the main meal or dinner. For children partaking in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme it was indicated that parents were asked to provide a healthy lunch and suggestions for these lunches were available in this policy. The policy referenced food allergies, food intolerance and guidelines for the management of these within the service.

Safe Sleep Policy

The policy covered in detail the hygiene and safety practices for use of cots and beds in the sleep room, with clear and concise details for the protocols for the rotational use of cots in the service. There were documented procedures for the monitoring of sleeping children in line with Sudden Infant Cot Death (SIDs) guidelines for safe sleep.

Outdoor play Policy

This policy outlined the service Play Together’s commitment to the provision of an outdoor environment that provided opportunities for children to explore and play with natural materials and active gross motor play. The safety protocols for the outdoor play space were well documented and explained. The policy also incorporated a daily safety check list to be carried out by nominated staff members.

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 attending the service. On the day of inspection, at all times in all rooms the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare (Early Years Services) regulations 2016.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection there were 23 children with 7 staff directly supervising them.

On the afternoon of the inspection there were 19 children being directly cared for by 6 staff.

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

Programme of activities and its implementation

This service catered for younger early years children, aged from 6 months to 3 years. Play Together had a second service in the locality (Play Together Mount Suir) to cater for the older early years children aged 3 to 6 years. Families had the option to transfer to this service for the advanced Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.

The registered provider and manager informed the inspector that the programme for the service was play based with a significant emphasis on natural and outdoor play. The daily routine was displayed and blocked into flexible opportunities for moving outdoors throughout the day.

It was documented in Play Together's statement purpose and function that the service provided "an environment that is child centred where the holistic development of the child is promoted". It was further documented that "our inquiry based, and emergent curriculum supports children to investigate their ideas and interests through play". This was observed through the opened ended materials and opportunities made available to the babies and wobblers which featured, treasure baskets with natural household objects and wall mounted sensorial tactile boxes. Staff were observed sitting on soft floor matting with the children engaging and encouraging the exploration of these opportunities.

The play garden was well utilised by all the children throughout the day of the inspection and was observed to be in continual use. The outdoor programme supported child-initiated activities, children were observed to have wellingtons and wet suits to explore this sensory rich play garden. The garden had sensory plants, wind chimes, sand boxes, clay boxes and water barrels from which the children were observed filling watering cans to make mud cakes. Another popular activity that the children were observed enjoying was the large climbing frame with slide, and cubby house.

Periodic written observations were held on each child's development and wellbeing.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)

(b) Two separate sleep rooms were available in the service and suitable for children to rest and sleep as required. Seven standard cots were available in one sleep room and two standard cots in the second sleep room for the children under two years. An adequate number of low beds were available for the children aged over two years. There was a quiet room off the pre-school room that had comfortable mats, seating and cushions to allow children to rest throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The outdoor play area was an urban garden adjacent to the childcare centre on the ground floor of an apartment block. The surface was synthetic grass, and the play space was enclosed by a high wall with further wrought iron security fencing. The area was naturalised with a wooden pergola for climbing plants and hanging baskets. Wooden planters with herbs and other sensory plants divided the different interest areas. There was a safe sturdy wooden climbing frame with a slide, and no hazards were observed in the outdoor play garden.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

All food and meals in the service were provided by a private catering company. The main meal of the day was on 1-week cycle menu plan. The onsite kitchen on the premises had been recently inspected by the HSE Environmental Health Service. All special dietary and cultural food requirements were catered for as far as possible.

The service supplied breakfast for all children attending, at 08:00hrs. A selection of cereals and toast with milk or water drinks was offered. The main meal was offered from 13:30hrs to 14:00hrs and a light meal at 15:00hrs. The main meal served on the day was a beef meat spaghetti bolognese, the light meal was cheese sandwiches, custard, or yogurt. Fruit snacks were observed to comprise of grapes /bananas oranges and kiwis. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the day. Appropriate cutlery and plates were provided for the child's age and stage of development.

Staff were observed to sit and chat with the children at mealtimes making it a fun and sociable time for them. The babies and wobblers were seated at low level and appropriate supportive seating. These meals were served to an appropriate consistency in accordance with their needs. Children were encouraged to feed themselves if they could and provided with help when required. The older children's meals were brought to their respective rooms on a food trolley and the meals were served up by the staff.