

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH058		
Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings		
Address of Service:	Rathconnell, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 RRP3		
Name of Registered Provider:	Kelly Murtagh, Charmaine Quinn		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	23/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM 25
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by independent providers. The Early Years' Service is located on the ground floor of a two-storey adapted domestic premises. Four pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a staff room, an office area and a kitchen are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear and side of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated in a rural area on the outskirts of the town of Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered providers and eight other adults were present and working directly with children during the inspection. One adult was present in a combined cook/ childcare role and one adult was present in a relief role.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 providers, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered providers were both present during the inspection.

(2) (a) (b)

Validated written references from past employers or a source other than a previous employer were available in respect of all adults.

(c)

Completed Garda Vetting disclosure was available in of all adults.

(d)

Police Vetting was available in respect of one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect of (2)(a)(b)(c) and (d) were carried out by the registered providers prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

All adults working directly with children held a major award at levels 5 and 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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)

The ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were forty-seven children attending the service supervised directly by ten adults including the registered providers.

(8)(a)

The roster indicated that two adults are present on the premises during the hours of operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered providers ensured that a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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 children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including self-feeding, self-toileting and caring for their belongings. Children were observed to sleep on an individual need's basis. There was good communication observed between the adult and child during nappy changing.

Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. The adults present were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities. Details relating to each child's daily activities including feeding, sleeping, nappy changing, events and activities was available on a daily report form. A verbal handover was provided by the adults present to parents at collection time.

The pre-school rooms were equipped with low level tables and chairs. A range of play experiences were available for all children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities.

Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals, and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters. Children’s artwork was noted in the pre-school rooms. Children enjoyed moving freely from one play experience to the next in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area.

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 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)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room equipped with four cots was available in the service. Low level beds were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep.

(3) (a)

Three outdoor play areas were available to the rear and side of the service. Natural grass, paving stone and mulch surface areas were in place. A concrete fence, metal grids, foliage and gate secured the perimeter of the outdoor areas. The areas were equipped with a variety of bikes, trikes, swings and climb/slide units as well as a crawl tunnel, a tyre swing, an elevated playhouse, a dig area and a “bus scoile” to support physical and imaginative play.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. One of the five cots in the sleep room was not fit for purpose as it was broken. Five standard cots were required to meet the sleep needs of the number of children in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The cot was removed, and a new cot was purchased. (Receipt included).

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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

A regular schedule of snacks and meals was provided to the children during the inspection. A menu plan was displayed in the entrance hall. All meals and snacks are prepared fresh on site by the cook. Children attending ECCE programmes bring their own mid-morning snack from home. At approximately 12:30 a hot meal consisting of bacon, peas, mashed potato and gravy was served to the children. The serving of water and milk was detailed on the daily menu plan. Natural yoghurt was served as a dessert to meet the dairy component of the meal. A snack was served in the afternoon and consisted of spaghetti with toast and a fruit platter. Adaptations to meals and snack were made based on dietary needs and the age and stage of development of the children.

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 entry to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

All toys and materials were easily cleanable and cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. There was an adequate supply of paper hand towel and liquid soap in the sanitary accommodation. Warm water was noted at the wash hand basins. Hand washing was facilitated before snack time and after self-toileting. The pre-school rooms and the sanitary accommodation were ventilated by means of openable windows. Foot operated pedal bins were noted in the pre-school rooms and the sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature. Individual care plans were in place in respect of children with defined medical conditions.

Safe Sleep:

A sleep log was in place indicating that the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was monitored every ten minutes by a nominated staff member. The temperature of the sleep room was also monitored and recorded.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed.

Outing:

The registered providers stated that outings were not undertaken from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The hinge of the wall mounted nappy changing unit in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to pre-school room 2 was broken and required repair or replacement. It is acknowledged that the nappy changing unit was not currently in use.

Safe Sleep:

Two children under the age of two years were placed to sleep on low level beds. A documented risk assessment had not been completed in respect of these two children before transitioning from sleeping in a cot to sleeping on a low-level bed had been initiated by the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The hinge on the wall mounted nappy changing unit was removed and replaced with two new hinges. (Photograph included).

The service management will ensure the risk assessment is done on all changing units.

Safe Sleep:

No child under the age of two is currently sleeping on a low-level bed. All children under the age of two are sleeping in the cots provided. A risk assessment has been developed to complete in conjunction with parents if any child shows signs of being developmentally ready to move from a cot to a low-level bed as a safer option for sleep for the individual child before they reach their second birthday. (Risk assessment document included).

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary and photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)

Seven staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the entrance hall.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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 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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 22 May 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms were serviced in March 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
Measurements of the wobbler room recorded and the number of children present on inspection indicated that there was insufficient space per child available in the wobbler room.

Age of Child	Space Required	Total Space Required
1 – 2 years	8 Full Day Care/ Part-time (2.8 m2)	22.4 m2
2 - 3 years	2 Full Day Care/Part time (2.35 m2)	4.7 m2
Total Space Required		27.1 m2
Total Space Available		18.209 m2

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The capacity of the service remains at 50 children.
Children in attendance have now been reallocated to rooms which provide sufficient floor space per child.
The registered providers will monitor enrolments and age ranges continuously to ensure that sufficient floor space is available to all children in the service. (Table included)

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Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector. The corrective actions if implemented should meet the regulatory requirement. The practice as stated by the registered providers will be reviewed on the next inspection.