

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW100		
Name of Service:	The Cave Preschool		
Address of Service:	High Street, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A67 AE95		
Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Fitzgerald		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	02/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon		
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 Cave Pre-school is a sessional service which currently provides care and education for children aged between 2 years and 7 months and 6 years of age. The registered provider operates the service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The service operates from a purpose-built prefabricated building. The service comprises of one large preschool room, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation. The outdoor area is located at the front and side of the premises.

Staffing

There were 3 adults present on the day of inspection who were working directly with the pre-school children, one of whom was the registered provider.

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 and safety. 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 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 service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
 - (b) At all times during the inspection the designated person in charge was present.
 - (c) There is a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee. The notice board at the entrance identified who was in charge, the deputy person in charge and the responsibilities of each staff member. It was observed that each staff member had individual roles/tasks which contributed to the smooth and calm atmosphere during the morning.

(2) One new staff member was employed since last inspection.

(a)&(b) There were two written and validated references from a past employer.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for the new staff member.

(d) Police vetting was available staff member who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
The three adults employed held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for Qualifications.

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.

(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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were three adults providing direct care to sixteen pre-school children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The registered provider ensured that a written record in relation to each child attending which included the particulars (a)-(i) was kept.

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)

Basic Needs of Children

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service. The food choices provided by parents for their child were nutritious. Water was freely available in the preschool to the children throughout the morning. Snack time was observed to be a relaxed and sociable experience for the children and the staff sat with the children and chatted with them during this time. Sufficient time was allowed for eating and the children were not rushed. Children enjoyed freedom of movement in the pre-school room and outside. All children had waterproof coats and boots for use in the outdoor area. Children's behaviour was managed positively by the staff caring for them and children were praised and encouraged throughout the morning. Children were observed washing their hands before snack, following outdoor play and toilet use.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The atmosphere in the pre-school was happy, relaxed, friendly and child centred. Staff members were respectful and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings. Adults were observed assisting the children playing with playdough, doing puzzles, and helping to dig in the outdoor area during the inspection. Information was shared with parents and guardians at the collection time. The service uses email to update parents regarding the service. Parents use texting and phone to contact the service.

Physical and Material Environment.

The pre-school room was equipped with low level tables and chairs and low-level shelving units with toys and materials easily accessible to the children. The room had defined areas of interest and were equipped and presented to create interesting areas for the children to engage in child led play appropriate to their stage of development. Interest areas included a home corner and play kitchen, dress-up and construction area with workbench, with plenty of associative equipment to extend children's imaginative play. Children were observed playing in the construction area and taking part in table-top activities such as playing with playdough, puzzles, bricks and colouring. The outdoor play equipment included sand and water play, slide and climbing area, climbing rope, playhouse and a planting area.

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 outdoor play area was fenced in and gated. The main entrance to the premises was secured by a locking device and bell system.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- The cleaning agents were inaccessible to the pre-school children and stored in the kitchen.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All heavy furniture was secured.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch and after using the toilet. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures.
- The care rooms and sanitary areas were clean and well maintained. The environment was clean. Table top cleaning was observed before and after snack time and after table-top play.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.
- Temperature reducing medication was available, in date and stored safely.

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)
Two adults who had completed Pre-hospital emergency care council (PHECC) training were immediately available to the pre-school children.
- (2)
(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position within the service.
(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending 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 fire fighting 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 was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 24th of April 2023.
- (1)(b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms dated September 2022 and April 2023 respectively.
- (4) A notice was displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the inspection all children were supervised by staff members while indoors and outdoors at all times.