

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX041				
Name of Service:	Discoveryland Creche and Montessori				
Address of Service:	14 Newlands, Wexford, Co. Wexford.				
Eircode:	Y35 C2YK				
Name of Registered Provider:	Ailish Lee				
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	31/05/2023				
Date of regulatory compliance meeting	28/07/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>39</td> <td>PM</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </table>	AM	39	PM	33
AM	39	PM	33		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan, E. McGarry.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors.

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

Discoveryland Creche is a privately operated early years service which opened in 2000. It offers a full day care service to children aged between 6 months and 6 years of age. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm and is registered to accommodate 46 early years children at any one time.

The service operates from a house in a residential estate in Wexford town. The service consists of four early years rooms: Baby room, Pre-Montessori room, Junior Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) room and Senior ECCE room. There is one designated sleep room and sanitary accommodation. Staff facilities and an office are available in an adjacent building. An outdoor garden play area is available to the rear of the property which the children have direct access to.

Staffing

There were 10 staff present on the day of inspection. The manager was the designated person in charge and assists directly with the children attending the service. The staff working with the children held the minimum level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4), 11(1)(2)(3)(4), 19(1)(a), 23, 24(1)(h), 25, (1) (2)(a)(b) 26(1)(a)(b) (4), 28, 29(d) and 30 (1)(2)(3)(4).

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.

Additional Information

A referral was made to the Environmental Health Office on 2 June 2023 in relation to concerns around food hygiene and safety.

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on the 28 July 2023 with the inspection regulation manager and the registered provider to discuss the outcome of the inspection.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation 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*

(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)(b)

The childcare manager was the designated person in charge and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. There was a second named staff available to deputise as required.

The files for 11 staff members were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

There were two validated references available on file for 10 staff members.

There was one validated reference available on file for one staff member.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available on file in the service for each staff member.
- (d)
Police vetting disclosures were available on file for one staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six consecutive months.
- (4)
Certificates of qualification for 10 staff members working directly with the early years children were available on file.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b)
One required reference was not available on file for one staff member.
- (2)(d)
Police vetting was not available for one new staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
Verification of a certificate of qualification for one new staff member was not available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Qualification Framework deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action:

- (2)(a)(b)
The reference is now on file for the staff member.
- (2)(d)
Police vetting has been applied for the staff member.
- (4)
The staff member is no longer working at the service.

Preventative Action:

(2)(a)(b)

The manager will use a template/checklist to ensure that all the requirements are in place before staff start work.

(2)(d)

The staff member will not work with the children in the service, till the police vetting has been obtained.

Evidence submitted:

Template for employee files. Reference for staff.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 is met. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service.

(4)

During the morning there were 39 children being directly cared for by 9 staff. During the afternoon there were 33 children being directly cared for by 7 staff, ensuring there were adequate staff available to work with the children and to maintain staff/child ratios at all times. An additional staff member was rostered to cover for lunch breaks and was rostered on the staff rota.

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 reflected the children's experience within the service focusing on the area of supporting relationships on the day of inspection:

The children were engaged in a variety of activities during the inspection including eating together, circle time, play dough, tabletop activities, and outdoor play. The staff were observed chatting and engaging with the children during the day. During circle time in the Junior ECCE room, children talked about their emotions and used visual card cues to show how they felt. Staff in the baby room were observed to be kind and considerate to the children in their care. Prompts for care such as, when the children appeared to be tired were picked up on quickly by the staff. Children were put to bed when they appeared tired.

Children who wore nappies had them changed as needed during the morning. Staff were observed to talk to the children during the procedure, helping them to relax. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic needs of the children:

1. Children in the baby room had to wait for approximately 15 minutes from the time the first child received their snack to the time the last child received their snack. The children were left sitting in their highchairs with no stimulation or distraction while they waited for their food.
2. Staff who spoke to the inspector said children were served toast in the morning when they arrived in the service for breakfast. Food from one food group is not considered to be a sufficient meal for early years children. Children required food from at least two food groups to constitute an adequate meal at this time.
3. Children in the baby room and pre-Montessori room were observed drinking juice in bottles posing a potential risk of dental decay.
4. The children in the baby room, pre-Montessori room and senior ECCE room did not get to play in the outdoor area for the duration of the inspection. The weather was good on the day and children could have availed of outdoor play. The service had a rota for the use of the outdoor area in the service. This was not adhered to on the day of inspection.

Physical and material environment:

The playrooms were limited in materials and resources, which did not provide opportunities for imaginative child-led play. Interest areas were sparsely resourced, with no invitations to play, set up for children. The play on the day was predominately adult led. For example:

1. In the baby room, there was a toy kitchen for the children to play with no kitchen equipment in it for the children to play with.
2. The toys available in the senior ECCE room were limited and did not provide children with opportunities for creative play. For example, the limited number of story and picture books were old, grubby and torn.
3. In the senior ECCE room, there was a construction bench in the room which did not have any tools on it for children to play with.
4. The outdoor area did not have any areas of interest to engage the children in imaginative play. There were broken toys on top of a playhouse which was overgrown with a climbing plant. One child pointed out the broken toys to the inspector and said, "Look they are all broken".

5. There was a limited amount of ride on toys for older children to use. There were only three ride-on toys in working order on the day of inspection.
6. Many of the toys available to the children in the outdoor area were broken. Toys used by children under two, to push, had broken wheels which were not possible to push easily.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Basic needs of the children:

Corrective Action:

1. The team will ensure that children receive appropriate stimulation when waiting for their food.
2. The service will provide toast at 8.30am and ensure that the midmorning snack includes food from two food groups.
3. The team have sent out notes to parents asking for water to be sent in.
4. The team will ensure that all children go outside during the day.

Preventative Action:

1. Children will not be put into chairs till their food is ready.
2. The service will send out notes to the parents.
3. The manager will monitor the situation.
4. The manager will check that the children go outside.

Evidence submitted:

The healthy eating policy, notes sent to parents.

Physical and material environment:

Corrective Action:

1. The kitchen is now equipped with toys.
2. Adequate books are now on the shelf for children.
3. The construction area is now equipped with toys.
4. Imaginative play is encouraged with the children.
5. New toys have been purchased.
6. Broken toys have been removed.

Preventative Action:

The manager will ensure interest areas are resourced and books are available.

The manager will ensure that the broken toys are removed.

Evidence submitted:

Photographs of toys in the kitchen, new books and new constructions toys.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 is met. This regulation will be inspected on the next inspection.

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:

Access to the service was appropriately secured with an electronic keypad system at the entrance ensuring restricted access to unauthorised persons. Cleaning products were stored away and inaccessible to children. The outdoor play area was fully enclosed to the rear of the premises.

Infection Control:

Children were observed being supervised with washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play and after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the services policy. Staff were observed to wear aprons and gloves for each individual nappy change, wash their hands and wipe down the mat between each nappy change. Children were helped with washing their hands after their nappy was changed.

Administration of Medication:

There was an administration of medication policy. The staff discussed with the inspector the procedure to follow when a child required administration of medication.

Medications were supplied by parents and stored securely in a designated area inaccessible to children. Each of the early years room had an administration of medication book.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector demonstrated that they understood the importance of adhering to safe sleep guidelines. Children over two years were placed to sleep on sleep mattresses and staff remained in the room with the children for the duration of sleep and recorded sleep checks.

There was documented evidence in the service, that sleeping babies colour, position and breathing were observed to be physically checked and recorded every 10 minutes as per safe sleep guidelines. Children under two years in the baby room were facilitated to sleep in the designated sleep room attached to the baby room. The staff were observed by the inspector to observe and record the sleeping children's colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The inspector observed the management of formula milk was not consistent in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspector said some parents provided pre-made formula bottles and some parents provided the powder and bottles for the staff to reconstitute the formula in the service themselves. This practice is contraindicated in nutrition guidance for early learning and care settings which recommends all formula given to children in an early years setting should be pre-made by parents before the child arrives to the service.
2. One staff member was observed to make a bottle of formula for a child in an adjoining building and bring the bottle through the service for the child in the baby room. The bottle was left to cool on the draining board which was used for the preparation of food brought from home in the early years room. This practice posed a potential risk of cross infection in the service.
3. There was no system in place for the regular cleaning and sterilising of mouthing toys in the baby room. This posed a risk of potential cross infection in the service.

4. There was one staff member who was wearing long pointed gel varnished nails. This posed a potential risk of injury to the children. The wearing of gel nail varnish also posed a potential risk of cross infection to the children. It is not possible to adhere to adequate hand hygiene practice wearing gel nails as bacteria adheres to the nails.
5. The food preparation area in the baby room was not adequate to prepare, present and reheat the food provided by the parents. The food was prepared on the draining board beside the sink which was also used for hand washing.
6. The microwave in use on the day of inspection was not clean. The area around the microwave was dusty. The shelf, that the microwave was positioned on, was covered in chipped paint which posed a potential risk of cross infection to the children.
7. There was no foot pedal bin beside the food preparation area. Staff used their gloved hands to open a handle on a cupboard door where staff also stored their personal belongings. There was a bin in this cupboard which was not pedal operated where staff disposed of food stuff and then continued to prepare food for the remaining children. This posed a potential risk of cross infection to the children.
8. Parents provided all snacks and meals for the children. The food provided was stored in a fridge in the baby room. The food preparation area was poorly planned and resourced to allow staff to prepare and reheat food in a safe and timely manner. There was no clean preparation area. Food for the children was prepared on the draining board beside the main sink and reheated in one small microwave on a shelf.
9. A sliced pan which was open was also stored in this cupboard. The cupboard was not clean and there were cobwebs and dust evident hanging from the ceiling of the room.
10. Drinks including milk drinks were observed stored directly beside the taps of the main sink in the baby room and pre-Montessori room.
11. The changing mat attached to the baby room was torn and frayed, posing a potential risk of cross infection.
12. The fridge in the senior ECCE room was too small to adequately store the food for the 15 children who were present on the day of inspection. The inspector observed on several occasions, that food fell out of the fridge onto the floor and was then put back into the fridge which posed a potential risk of cross infection.
13. Food was stored inappropriately. There were cartons of formula and a toaster stored in the base of a press in the baby room. The base of the press was unclean and dusty. The base of the press was made of untreated wood which was not possible to clean adequately. The toaster was old and not clean.

Administration of Medication:

1. A review of the administration of medication books showed that that were not fully completed, with parents signatures missing on a number of the entries.

General Safety:

1. The ground covering in the outdoor area was made of soft rubber type tiles. Many of the tiles were old and lifting at their joints with grass growing through the joins. This posed as a potential risk of fall injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Infection Control:

Corrective Action:

1. Parents have been asked to ensure formula bottles are premade before coming to the service.
2. Staff will no longer make formula bottles.
3. Toys will be sterilised on a regular basis.
4. Staff member has shortened her nails.
5. A new food preparation area has been put in place.
6. Staff have received food safety training and cleaning and hygiene reviewed.
7. Foot pedal bins are now in place.
8. Extra worktops have been installed in the baby room. New presses have been installed.
9. Bread will now be stored in the fridge.
10. Drinks will be stored in the fridge.
11. The changing mat has been replaced.
12. A new fridge has been purchased.
13. A new toaster has been purchased.

Preventative Action:

All areas will be addressed at a staff meeting in the coming week when all holidays are over, and all staff are together. The manager has spoken to staff separately to go through all areas.

Evidence submitted:

Photographs /receipts for new bin, fridge, toaster, changing mats. Photographs of new worktops and cleaned fridges. Copy of HACCP training certificates for staff. Copy of note sent to parents regarding bottle making. Copy of bottle making policy.

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Action:

Staff were talked to regarding the importance of ensuring the medication book is fully completed.

Preventative Action:

The manager will review medication books.

Evidence submitted:

The administration of medication policy and medication consent form.

General Safety:

Corrective Action:

The outdoor area has been cleaned.

Preventative Action:

The manager has spoken with staff to ensure that areas are checked.

Evidence submitted:

Photograph of the cleaned outdoor area.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 is met. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

(1)(h)

Attendance records in all four early years rooms accurately reflected the children's attendance at the service. The attendance records maintained, where drop off times and collection times for all of the children.

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)

There were staff trained in first aid available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the premises and was available for use.

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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out within the service. Records reviewed on inspection confirmed that the last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 17 May 2023.

(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment was serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in November 2022.

(4)

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

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that adequate insurance was in place.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

The service had a cleaning schedule.

Non-Compliance Information

The service was not sufficiently cleaned and well maintained. There was evidence of wear and tear observed:

1. The two nurturing chairs in the baby room were worn, torn and dirty with brown and dark stains.
2. There were two seats for children in the baby room covered in fabric that was worn, torn and grubby.
3. The straps on the baby chairs in the baby room were grubby and worn.
4. The fridge in the senior ECCE room was unclean.
5. There was dust and grime evident on the door and on the floor beside this fridge.
6. The area behind the toilet in the senior ECCE room was dirty with a build-up of dirty brown residue.
7. The sink attached to this toilet was unclean with a build-up evident on the sink.
8. There was not adequate ventilation in the staff toilet beside the baby room or the toilet beside the senior ECCE room. Both rooms had neither openable window nor satisfactory mechanical ventilation.
9. The floor of the staff toilet beside the baby room was unclean with debris.
10. The floor of the nappy changing area was not clean. There was a build-up of dust and dirt and debris in the corners of the room and under the sinks.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action:

1. New chairs have been ordered.
2. New bouncers are now in place.
3. New baby chairs are now in place.
4. The fridges have been cleaned and will be inspected weekly.
5. The service has been cleaned and painted.
6. The bathrooms have been cleaned and painted.
7. The bathrooms have been cleaned.
8. Two new mechanical ventilations were purchased.

9. The serviced has been cleaned and painted.

10. The serviced has been cleaned and painted.

Preventative Action:

On an ongoing basis, staff will be monitored in their cleaning in each room by manager. Rooms will be inspected on a daily basis by manager.

Evidence submitted:

Photographs and receipts for new bouncer chairs, adult chair and fridge. Photograph of bathroom and rooms, receipt for new ventilation and paint. Cleaning schedules and check lists.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 is met. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,

the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1)(2)(3)

There was sufficient space to accommodate the number of children present on the day in the baby room, the junior ECCE room and senior ECCE room.

(4)

In the junior ECCE room and senior ECCE room, there was sufficient space to accommodate children attending for a sessional service and full day care.

Non-Compliance Information

There was insufficient space to accommodate the number of children present in the pre-Montessori room:
On the day of inspection there were 11 children aged 2 to 3 years present for full day care. The attendance records indicate that there were 13 children registered in the pre-Montessori room.

Rooms:	Ages:	Minimum Space measurements per child:	Space Required:	Space available:
Pre-Montessori Room am	11 children x 2 to 3 years	2.35 square meters	25.85 sq. meters	22.25sq. meters
pm	11 children x 2 to 3 years	2.35 square meters	25.85 sq. meters	22.25sq. meters

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action:

The number of children attending the pre-Montessori room has been reduced to 10 children.

Preventative Action:

Children will transfer to the ECCE rooms as they turn two years of age.

Evidence submitted:

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 is met. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.