

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX055		
Name of Service:	Hodgesmill Creche and Montessori		
Address of Service:	Hodgesmill, Piercestown, Wexford, Co. Wexford		
Eircode:	Y35 Y092		
Name of Registered Provider:	Frances Wadding		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	05/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM 25
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. 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

Hodgesmill Creche and Montessori is a privately operated early years service offering a play-based programme to children aged 1 to 6 years of age, Monday to Friday. It is located in a rural setting in south Co Wexford. The service is located in a building adjoining to the side of registered provider's home. It consists of three playrooms (one playroom upstairs and two downstairs), sleep facilities, a kitchen, and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor play area is available to the early years children to the rear of the premises which is fully enclosed.

Staffing

The childcare manager is the designated person in charge daily and works directly with the children. All the staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5, 6 and 8 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 the following regulations. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),
Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4),
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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, 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) There was a designated person in charge on the premises at all times.

(2) The staff files for all eight staff members were reviewed.

(a)(b)

Validated references for all staff were kept in each individual's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff that had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

(4)

Certificate of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the early years children was available on file.

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)

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

(2)

During the morning there were 36 children being directly cared for by 6 staff. During the afternoon there were 25 children being directly cared for by 6 staff, ensuring there were adequate staff available to work with the children and to maintain staff/child ratios at all times.

The designated person in charge and the registered provider were rostered supernumery to cover for lunch breaks and assist when needed in the rooms.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service comprises of three early years rooms located in a building off the registered provider's private residence and were well laid out and resourced. The toys, equipment and materials used created well defined interest areas with ample space in each room for children to play, explore and work together in pairs and small groups. Interest areas included: a cosy library area, role play area, construction area, sensory play area and art and craft areas. The service has two outdoor play areas to the side and rear of the building. Both are well designed and resourced with a range of natural materials. The outdoor areas are fully enclosed ensuring children had space and freedom to run and play while staff provided supervision. Children from all the early years rooms were fully engaged in play during the day, which included time spent in free play, tabletop activities such as, painting, and outdoor play.

(b)

The service had a designated sleep room with four cots and stackable sleep beds to meet the sleep needs of the children. The sleep room was calm and conducive to sleep. Staff were observed physically checking sleeping children during the day. The ECCE room had a quiet area for children to rest, relax or sit during the morning.

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

The service has a healthy eating policy which is shared with parents and guardians. All food and drinks are supplied by parents daily and is stored in the services fridges. Children had access to their drinks throughout the day, with their water bottles and beakers kept in baskets on a shelf in the playrooms.

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 secured when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained closed and secured during the day, 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:

There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand hygiene throughout the service. Regular handwashing was observed throughout the day. The service was clean and well maintained, with cleaning schedules signed daily. The staff informed the inspector how they managed the cleaning of mouthing toys and sterilising of soothers.

Administration of Medication:

The service had an administration of medication and a system for the recording of any medication given. There was currently no child in need of any administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy and designated sleep room with four cots. Children under two years of age were settled to sleep in the cots in the sleep room during the day when they showed signs of sleep or tiredness. There was documented evidence in the service, that the sleeping babies colour, position and breathing were observed to be physically checked and recorded every 10 minutes as per safe sleep guidelines.

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 for children available to the children attending the 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 completed in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on 17 August 2023.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in March 2023.

(4)

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