

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2016MO003 | | | | |
| Name of Service: | Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre | | | | |
| Address of Service: | Castlebar road, Westport, Co. Mayo | | | | |
| Eircode: | F28 A6W7 | | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Bronwyn O'Donnell | | | | |
| Service type: | Full day care | | | | |
| Date(s) of Inspection: | 04/06/2025 | | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>38</td> <td>PM</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </table> | AM | 38 | PM | 33 |
| AM | 38 | PM | 33 | | |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo | | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | F. Duffy and F. Joyce | | | | |
| Title: | Early Years Inspector(s) | | | | |

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).

Description of service

Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre is registered to provide full day care, part-time and sessional services to preschool children and is located in Westport in county Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged between one and six years of age between 08:00 to 17:30 hours. The service operates from a converted commercial building. There are four playrooms of which two are located on the ground floor and two playrooms are located on the first floor of the building. The two upstairs playrooms are converted for use as sleep rooms at specified times each day and a kitchen is located on the first floor. There are three separate outdoor play areas to the rear of the building directly accessible from the ground floor playroom.

Staffing

There were 10 staff working in the service at the time of the inspection including the registered provider and relief staff members. Eight staff work directly with the children. The registered provider was not on site daily and did not work directly with the children. One staff member carries out caretaking, catering and administrative work.

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 and facilities. The inspection 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(s) wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named staff member to deputise in the event of her absence.
- (b) The person in charge was present throughout the period of inspection.

(2)

On review of the staff roster and conversation with the service manager it was determined there were ten staff members employed in the service. The files of all 10 staff were examined:

- (a) There were 17 of the required 20 written and validated references from past employers.
- (b) There were 3 of the required 20 written and validated references from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for six staff.

(d) International police vetting was available for four of the four staff members who lived outside the state for over six months as an adult.

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for 6 of the 8 staff who worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

9 (2) (c) The service did not comply with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Four staff members garda vetting was not within the required timeframe.

9 (2) (d) International police vetting certificate was not translated by a recognised translation service.

9 (4) There was 1 adult working directly with children who was not able to provide evidence that they had obtained at least an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

9 (2) (c) The service will ensure all staff garda vetting certificates for all staff are in date going forward.

9 (2) (d) All international police vetting certificates will be translated by a recognised translation service going forward.

9 (4) The adult who did not have an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework no longer works in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

9 (2) (c) The updated garda vetting certificates for all 4 staff were received. Evidence was provided the service maintains a log of all garda vetting certificates and a statement was received stating they will apply for renewal in advance of expiration dates going forward.

9 (2) (d) A translated international police vetting certificate was received from a recognised translation service. A statement was received from the service stating international police vetting certificates will be translated by a recognised translation service.

9 (4) A statement was received from the service stating staff will have appropriate training and certification before commencing work in the service.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation (9) (2) (c), 9 (2) (d) and 9 (4).

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

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The registered provider ensured the service had written policies and procedures specified in Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

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) There were 7 adults working directly with 38 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Pre-school room 1: 3 adults cared for 19 children aged from 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age.

Pre-school room 2: 1 adult cared for 8 children aged 3 to 5 years of age.

Toddler Turtles room: 1 adult cared for 5 children aged 2 to 3 years of age.

Wobbler Ducklings room: There 2 adults caring for 6 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times when children were present in the service as evidenced by the staff roster.

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

Basic Needs:

- Food for snacks provided by the parents/guardians was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included berried fruits, yogurt and filled sandwiches. Plates were provided for snacks and additional food was available in the event a child was hungry or did not like their snack.
- Individual water bottles were accessible from a basket which the children could easily reach. They were observed in use in the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Children in the pre-school rooms were observed relaxing in the cosy rest/quiet area, which was located away from noisy activities. The area was clearly defined with soft seating and cushions
- The hot meal was chicken curry and rice. It was prepared off-site and transported in heat retaining cookware. Children who did not want to eat chicken curry were provided with an alternative meal.
- The sanitary areas were located off the care rooms and toilet trained children were noted to access the area independently. Adults were nearby to provide reminders to wash and dry their hands after toileting.
- Nappy changing was noted to occur at regular intervals and in response to verbal and non-verbal cues from 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:

- A bell system was in place on an internal entrance door to the service to control admission of people to the service. This door was secured during the inspection to prevent children from leaving unauthorised.
- Cleaning products were safely stored on high shelving and out of reach of children.
- The door to the kitchen upstairs was locked and the key stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were available throughout the service with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels available.
- Hand hygiene was observed to be practiced frequently in the downstairs playrooms. Children were observed washing their hands before eating and after toileting.
- The service had cleaning schedules in place.
- The playrooms and play equipment were observed to be in good repair and clean during the inspection.
- Refrigerators were provided to store children's snacks provided from home for snack times.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was observed to be administered to a child by staff on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available. It was safely stored and in date. In conversation staff were able to detail the procedures for administering medication to children.

Safe Sleep:

The Wobbler Ducklings and Toddler Turtles playrooms were converted for sleep purposes after the main meal of the day. Children slept on stackable beds which were laid out on the floor an adequate distance apart and away from windows and radiators. The room temperature in the rooms was between the required range of 16-20°C for a sleep-room. Records were available to show that observations of sleeping children were recorded at 10-minute intervals by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Art equipment and sweeping brushes were stored in the downstairs sanitary unit and posed cross infection risks.
2. The nappy bin in the upstairs changing room was not a foot pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed bin, posing a risk of cross infection.
3. The nappy changing mat in the upstairs changing area was not cleaned and disinfected in between changes as specified in the nappy changing policy, posing a risk of cross infection.
4. The staff member changing nappies in the upstairs nappy changing room between 11.50 and 12.10 changed their gloves in between changes but did not wash their hands as specified in the nappy changing policy, posing a risk of cross infection.
5. The children's hands were not washed between nappy changing and eating their lunch in the Wobbler Ducklings room. Their hands were cleaned with wipes, but the hygiene policy specifies children's hands should be washed after nappy changing and before meals. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The art equipment and sweeping brushes were removed from the downstairs sanitary area.
2. The nappy bin observed on inspection has been replaced with a foot pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed bin.
- 3 and 4. All staff are following proper nappy changing procedures in line with the service policy.
5. All children's hands will be washed with soap and water before meals.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence provided to show the equipment removed from sanitary area and the new storage facility built to house the children.
2. Photographs of new bin submitted to inspectorate.
- 3 and 4. Staff were briefed about proper nappy changing procedures as per policy, a step-by-step guide was posted in the nappy changing areas and a statement was submitted stating managers will conduct spot checks during nappy changing.

5. A statement from the registered provider was received stating wipes would no longer be used to clean hands, all children would be supervised washing their hands before meals and managers will conduct spot checks to ensure policy is adhered to.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection under regulation 23.

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) Certificates were available in the service showing that four staff members held the required First Aid Responder (FAR) training in first aid for children.

(2)

(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in areas of the service including the upstairs hallway and Preschool playroom.

(b) The first aid supplies were available at all times if the children attending the pre-school service required them.

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) Records in writing of the monthly fire drills that had been completed in the service were kept and available for inspection. The most recent fire drill was completed on the 14th March 2025.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated August 2024. The smoke alarm certificate was dated 6 March 2025.
- (4)
- Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on the walls of the service.