

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017DR501
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Name of Service:	Cocobee Childcare
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Address of Service:	1 & 2 Old Bray Road, Cornelscourt, Foxrock, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 XP29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynn Ruddle
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	29/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	55
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and O. Quill
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
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Description of service

Cocobee Childcare is an early years service offering full day care to children aged between 0-6 years. The service opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. It operates from a purpose built two-storey facility in an urban area of Foxrock, South County Dublin. Children are allocated to one of five rooms according to their age and have access to an outdoor area. Separate sleep rooms are available for children attending the Baby and Wobbler rooms.

Staffing

There are 20 staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge. The person in charge reports to an operations manager who in turn reports to the registered provider. Eighteen staff were present during the inspection. Sixteen staff were allocated to work directly with the children with two staff to manage and help as needed. The operations manager was present for the feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1), (2) & (4), 11 (1) & (2), 19 (1) (a) & (b), 23 and 25(1). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(a) & (b) and 23 (infection control). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler and Toddler rooms.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of management, 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

The inspection focused on all staff employed by the registered provider for regulations 9(2)(c) and (4).

The inspection focused on the recruitment records of adults who had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection dated 11 July 2022 for regulations 9(2)(a), (b) and (d). Six staff members and the operations manager had started working in the service since that date. The regulatory requirements were met as follows:

- (2)
 - (a) Records were available evidencing past employer references had been considered for all new employees.
 - (b) Records were available evidencing sources other than a past employer had been considered for one new employee who did not have any previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for nine adults who had lived in another state as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing 13 staff employed to work directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had been employed since the previous inspection. Through review of records and discussion with the adult it was evident that they had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult. The registered provider did not meet compliance with this regulation on the previous inspections dated 6 September 2021 and 11 July 2022. The actions submitted by the registered provider following those inspections have not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.

(4) It was not evidenced that seven out of twenty adults employed to work directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. The registered provider did not meet compliance with this regulation on the previous inspections dated 6 September 2021 and 11 July 2022. The actions submitted by the registered provider following those inspections have not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff member has applied for their police vetting and it will be added to their file.

(4) Four of the employees are awaiting delivery of their qualification from their colleges who issue these documents twice a year. The three remaining staff members are enrolled in the appropriate childcare courses and are currently finishing their late stages. These staff members are considered support workers as the ratio is kept within rooms with qualified members. Notwithstanding this, the service only want to have qualified staff members on premises hence management has started a recruitment process for new team members. Staff files will be reviewed monthly to ensure that the necessary documents are held as required on staff files. A staff file checklist will be visible at all times on the press used for this purpose. This visual will be used by the management board as a refresher when checking necessary paperwork.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

(2)(d) The non-compliance remains outstanding.

(4) The non-compliance remains outstanding.

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) There was an adequate number of adults available to the children.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained. Sixteen adults were allocated to work with fifty-five children. Two adults were available to provide help within the rooms as needed.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Inspectors observed children moving freely, exploring their environment, playing and engaging in activities. They spent time outdoors where they had access to equipment for play and full-body movement including ride-on toys and balls. Staff applied sunscreen to the children before taking them outside appropriate to the weather. The children wore sun hats and canopies were used to provide shading.

The children's rooms were laid out with designated interest areas including home-corners. The Wobbler room had matted areas for floor play and equipment to support gross motor skills including a small slide with steps. Materials and equipment were appropriate for the developmental stages of the children and included stacking toys, cause and effect toys, puzzles, mark making materials and books. These were visible and accessible to the children. Areas were available for the children to rest or take a break from activities.

Children were provided with food and snacks at regular intervals. Drinks of water were offered with meals and snacks and were always available to the children. Inspectors observed mealtimes were relaxed and promoted children's social and independence skills. Children sat in small groups with adults. The adults engaged the children in conversation and provided help when needed. Extra food was available for children who requested more. Bibs were provided for children in the Wobbler room to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet.

Children were encouraged and supported to manage their personal care. The children were assisted to wash and clean their hands and faces. They used the toilet as needed with staff available to help. Children who wore nappies had these changed at scheduled times and in between when needed. Staff changed the clothes of a child that had become accidentally soiled in the Wobbler room in a timely manner. Inspectors observed staff using these times as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.

All children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after their meal. Staff reported that they place the children to sleep outside of the scheduled time if they show signs of tiredness. Children in the Toddler room slept on low beds within their room. Children from the Wobbler room slept in cots in a separate room. The transition from the meal to sleep was managed smoothly and the children appeared calm and content. Lighting was dimmed and soft music was played. Children who used soothers for comfort were given these at this time. Staff remained with the children providing reassurance while they settled to sleep.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children through use of soft and gentle tones and hugs. Children were promptly comforted when they became upset and staff always engaged positively with the children. A daily diary was shared with parents/guardians in real time to share information about their child's day in the service.

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

Inspectors observed the following examples of measures taken to provide for the children's safety:

General Safety:

- Emergency doors were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.
- Cleaning products and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Cables and blind cords were secured out of reach of children.
- Children's attendance was recorded accurately for reference in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Infection Control:

- Children's hands were washed at required times including before eating and after using the toilet to prevent the spread of infection.
- The Pre-school rooms and sanitary facilities were observed to be in a clean condition.
- Sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels for handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take when giving medicine to children, including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Records were available detailing medicines given. These included the signature of the staff member who gave the medicine and the staff who witnessed the medicine being given. The records had been signed by parents indicating the information had been shared.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were placed to sleep in appropriate facilities including standard cots and low-level beds according to their age and stage of development.
- Inspectors observed staff checking sleeping children at 10-minute intervals and maintaining a record of the checks.
- Appropriate bedding was used to prevent overheating.
- Room temperatures were maintained between 16 and 20°C when children were sleeping.

Outings:

The deputy person in charge reported that the service does not undertake outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The premises was not adequately secured as outlined below:

a) When the inspectors arrived at the service, they observed children seated at the front of the premises. Half of a gate was missing, leading directly to a busy road. Although cones had been placed in the space, these did not provide a barrier, posing a risk of unauthorised access or a child leaving unsupervised. The staff told the inspectors that the children were only in the outdoor space for a short period as they were practicing for “graduation”. The operations manager stated the gate would be re-instated immediately.

b) The external door leading to/from the Wobbler room was not adequately secured. The door had a low-level handle and thumb-turn lock which could be opened by a child. The lock was not in use when the door was opened by the inspector. The door led directly onto the front of the premises which led to an open gate and a busy road. A broken latch was observed at the top of the door.

2. There was no signposting over the window in the main cot room to identify it as an emergency window exit in accordance with conditions specified in the services fire safety certificate dated 3 November 2005. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 11 July 2022. The actions submitted by the registered provider following that inspection had not been effective in preventing the non-compliance.

Infection Control:

3. Staff did not consistently follow procedures to prevent the spread of infection when changing children’s nappies. The inspector observed a staff member re-dressing a child after nappy changing without removing their gloves. The adult did not wash her hands or clean the mat after changing nappies.

4. Equipment including gym mats for use within the pre-school rooms were stored in the sanitary facilities on the ground floor posing a risk of cross infection. This was observed on the previous inspection dated 11 July 2022. The actions submitted by the registered provider following that inspection had not been effective in preventing the non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.
 - a) The gate has been replaced and secured at the entrance of the centre. The gate will not be removed again going forward. The management team will continue spot checks to ensure the gate is correctly always secured.
 - b) An out of child reach lock has been put in place on the door to ensure it can only be opened at full reach by an adult. Staff have been trained and reminded on the importance of ensuring the lock is always secured. All staff have been briefed and retrained on the importance of having entrance doors always secured. Rooms in which doors are used for parents' collections and droppings will be locked every time a child comes in or leaves premises. Continuous spot checks throughout the day to ensure that the doors are always kept locked.
2. Signposting over the window in the main cot room to identify as an emergency window exit has been replaced on the wall. All team members were briefed and trained again on the importance of ensuring the signpost is in place.

Infection Control:

3. All staff have been briefed and retrained on the importance of infection control with significant emphasis on the changing process. New signage has been put in place to ensure the services infection control processes are always implemented. All staff members will attend a training reminder to ensure all processes are followed. The management team will continue to shadow all staff on a weekly basis to ensure processes are followed. Management will focus on infection control processes when training and inducting new staff.
4. The gym mats that are not in use by the centre have been removed and are now stored in an offsite storage area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1.
 - a) Photograph of gate secured.
 - b) Photograph of latch on door.
2. Photograph of emergency exit signage over sleep room window.

Infection Control:

- Record of staff training in nappy changing procedure regarding infection control.
- No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed the actions submitted to adequately address the non-compliances. The registered provider must ensure that any locking mechanisms placed on exits are in keeping with fire legislation and do not impede the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire.

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.

Compliance Information

A person trained in first aid for children was available throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person trained in first aid to be available at all times of opening.