

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,
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Eircode:	D18 XP29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Foy, Lynn Ruddle
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	30/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland, R Duff
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 a privately owned service located in an urban area in Foxrock, South County Dublin. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey facility registered to provide full day care to children aged between 0-6 years. Opening hours are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Children are allocated to one of five rooms according to their age and two dedicated sleep rooms are available for children attending the Baby and Wobbler rooms. Additionally, the service has a fully enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently twenty staff members employed to work in the service, including the person in charge and the operations manager. On the day of inspection sixteen adults were working directly with the children including two deputy persons in charge who were available to provide support and relief cover. The person in charge was also available to support when required. The operations manager arrived at the service after the inspectors arrival.

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 records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1) (a-c), (2) (a-d), (3), (4)- Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1), (2)-Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24 (1), (3), (4) Checking in and out and record of attendance

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the operations manager, 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*
- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 had a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person is on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
 - (c) A clearly established management structure was evident within the service.

(2) Conversation with the person in charge confirmed that six adults commenced employment in the service since 11 June 2024 when Regulation 9 was last inspected. Documentation required under Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of the six adults as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all twenty adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) Eight written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for twenty adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available in respect of five adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the six adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)(b) A second written and verified reference was not available for one adult employed to work directly with the children.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) (a)(b) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing employment in the service.

(4) Conversation with the person in charge, staff and review of staff rosters demonstrated that one adult identified on the last inspection on 11 June 2024 as not holding a qualification to work with children was still employed to work directly with the children. This regulatory requirement was non-compliant on previous inspections dated 6 September 2021, 11 July 2022 and 29 May 2023. The preventive actions submitted following these inspections have not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

2(a)(b) The second reference for the staff member in question was immediately sourced, verified, and placed in the individual's personnel file.

(4) The staff member identified as not holding a recognised Early Years qualification has had their contract amended to a role with no child-facing responsibilities. They have been enrolled in a recognised QQI Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education programme and their duties have been adjusted to reflect the change.

A full audit of all staff files was carried out. A staff recruitment checklist has been introduced and a standardised template for reference verification has been developed. A refresher training session has been delivered to all administrative and management staff involved in recruitment. Quarterly audits of staff files have been scheduled to prevent recurrence of similar issues and to ensure continuous compliance.

The registered providers have stated that Cocobee Childcare will no longer hire any individuals who do not hold a recognised qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

Second written and verified reference.

Staff file check list.

Reference check record.

Evidence of course enrolment.

Evidence of amendment of the staff members contract.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliances.

These actions will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were sixteen adults available to forty-six children in the morning and fifteen adults available to forty-four children in the afternoon.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained for the duration of the inspection in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered.

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-

(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

The inspectors observed care practices that were respectful and consistent throughout the inspection. Staff were available to children and interacted warmly and positively, fostering a nurturing and supportive atmosphere. Mealtimes were a calm social experience and staff sat with children encouraging independence and providing support where needed. The service provides breakfast and a hot meal and parents provide snacks for the children. Drinking water was readily available to the children and staff encouraged them to drink water with their meals and during outdoor play. Nappies were changed routinely and as needed, with staff interacting attentively with children. Potty training was observed to be a positive experience; for example, staff were observed praising a child for independently using the toilet reinforcing confidence and independence.

Some of the babies slept according to their individual needs, while older children followed designated sleep times. Staff confirmed that children could sleep at other times should the need arise. Play was observed to be child led and children moved freely around their environment. Staff demonstrated awareness of children's verbal and nonverbal cues and responded appropriately. For example, when a baby showed an interest in their family photo, staff immediately engaged in conversation with the baby supporting language development. Children's voices were respected and included in decision making. For example, children in the Toddler room were given the opportunity to choose the books to read during story time. Older children were invited to choose the activities they preferred to engage in and staff took time to involve older children in discussion around the summer activity plans.

Transitions throughout the day were smooth, with clear signals given to prepare children for changes in activity. Effective strategies were implemented to prevent conflicts among younger children, including the use of sand timers to support sharing. Staff maintained good hygiene practices cleaning children's faces and noses and ensuring younger children wore bibs where needed. All children had the opportunity to engage in outdoor play, during which staff were observed to be attentive and responsive.

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 entrance doors into the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised access or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hazardous materials and medication were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Locks were in place on low level storage preventing children from gaining access to potential hazards.

Infection Control:

- Children's lunches containing perishable items were stored in the refrigerator.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to support hand hygiene practices. Staff were observed encouraging hand washing following toileting, nappy changing, outdoor play and before meals.
- Staff were observed to disinfect the tables before lunch time.
- Children's bed linen was stored in individual bags and staff reported appropriate laundry procedures were in place.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated clear understanding of the procedure to administer medication to a child if required and documentation was available for review.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep logs were maintained and staff were observed to document room temperature, breathing, colour and position at regular intervals.
- Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and used in accordance with children's age and stage of development.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed for the duration of the inspection.
- Staff reported that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis and were familiar with fire drill procedures.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- 1 The temperature in a designated sleep room where children between the age of one and two years were sleeping was recorded at 24°C which is outside the recommended range for safe sleep. Although an air conditioning unit was in place, that it was not working effectively at the time of the inspection. Once the issue was brought to the attention of management, it was inspected and confirmed that there was a concern that the pipe may not be working effectively and action was taken to try to reduce the temperature including opening doors to increase circulation. A new air conditioning unit was subsequently purchased and the inspectors observed that the room temperature had returned to a safe level.
- 2 Staff reported that infant formula was being prepared within the service. This practice is not in line with current guidance for safe feeding of reconstituted powdered infant formula and is at variance with the services bottle preparation policy.
- 3 A loose toilet seat was observed in the children's toilet, posing a potential health and safety risk.

Infection Control:

- 4 A number of vinyl chairs in the Toddler room were observed to be torn exposing the inner foam. The exposed tear posed an infection control risk, as the surface cannot be effectively cleaned or sanitised.
- 5 The laminate surface on the nappy changing unit in the Toddler room was observed to be worn, with areas of exposed wood visible compromising the ability to effectively clean and sanitise the surface.
- 6 Staff reported that toilet roll inserts stored on a shelf in the children's toilet were being repurposed for art activities. As these materials originated from paper toilet rolls, they are considered unhygienic due to their exposure to the toileting environment.

Ineffective hygiene practices pose a risk of cross contamination and may cause illness to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A new air conditioning unit was purchased and a daily sleep room temperature log is now maintained. The person in charge will carry out and document weekly checks on ventilation and cooling equipment. All staff have received refresher training on safe sleep guidelines and additional fans and thermometers are now available if required.

2. The registered provider stated that the service will no longer prepare infant formula onsite and parents have been notified. Staff have received training on infant feeding practices and signage has been placed in the care room.
3. A new toilet seat is now in place.

Infection Control:

4. New vinyl chairs have been purchased and are now in place in the Toddler room.
5. The laminate surface on the changing unit has been repaired and a new unit has been ordered.
6. All toilet roll inserts have been disposed of.

An audit of equipment has been carried out and a weekly maintenance and hygiene inspection checklist has been developed. Staff have received refresher training on infection control and instructed to report any damaged equipment. A log of damaged equipment and actions taken is now maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of air conditioning unit.
Documentation in relation to temperature log.
Evidence of sleep log with documented temperatures.
Evidence of safe sleep training.
Signage with regards to bottle feeding.
Evidence of training on infant feeding.
Photographic evidence of new toilet seat.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of new vinyl chairs.
Photographic evidence of repairs made to the changing table.
Photographic evidence that toilet rolls were removed.
Evidence of staff training.
Monthly room checklist.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliances. These actions will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A review of records confirmed that all children were checked in and out of the service.
- (3)
- (a) On the day of inspection, access to the service was granted by the person in charge and deputy person in charge.
 - (b) A visitor log was maintained in the reception area and included required information.
- (4) A review of the log confirmed it was retained in accordance with the specified retention period.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the service is adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School