

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017KE502		
Name of Service:	Flowertots Preschool		
Address of Service:	Caragh Community Centre, Gingerstown, Caragh, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W91 EV72		
Name of Registered Provider:	Natalie Stout		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher		
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	N/A
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Description of service

Flower Tots pre-school is located in a rural setting on the outskirts of Caragh Village, Co. Kildare. The service operates from the first floor of Caragh Community G.A.A. centre and two pre-school rooms are provided. A secure play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Sessional care and education is provided to children from 2-6 years of age. Opening hours are from 9:00am-12:00pm and from 12:15pm-15:15pm for 38 weeks of the pre-school year.

Staffing

There were six staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. Five people were present in the service working directly with pre-school children on the day of inspection, this included the registered provider.

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 and safety. 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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 and a named person to deputise as required.

The records of six staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Twelve written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all adults employed in the service and one student.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all employed staff members.

(4)

All members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff member has applied for police vetting.

Ensure any staff member that requires international police vetting will have same on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email correspondence dated 4 December 2023.

Summary Comment

Regulation 9(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c) and (4) are compliant, however, due to the timeline for the international police vetting process to be completed, the requirement for Regulation 9(2)(d) has not 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
There were twenty-eight children attending the service being supervised directly by five staff members.
- (3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The pre-school rooms were equipped with suitable low level child sized tables and chairs that enabled the children sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. There was a variety of age-appropriate toys and learning equipment available at an accessible height on low level open shelving units to facilitate a child-led learning environment. Resources included plenty of art and craft materials, equipment for fine motor skill development and props and open ended materials in the interest areas promoted imaginary play and learning.

A comfortable rest area was available in the Play-school room and children were observed using the space to read a book or take a break from activities during the morning. The Montessori room was suitably equipped with montessori learning materials and all children transitioned from the Play-school room into the Montessori room for a period during the morning. The outdoor play area was equipped with suitable play equipment that provided for gross motor play activities and sand and water play provided sensorial play experiences for the children.

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 had a healthy eating policy in place and parents provided the morning snack for their child. Foods provided included sandwiches with various healthy fillings, fresh fruit pieces, crackers, cheese and yoghurts. Children had their own drinks of either water or fruit juice and fresh drinking water was available in the pre-school. Staff members ensured all food provided was nutritious and suitable and during conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces. The staff members also advised they encouraged healthy eating practices with the children and planned an area of the curriculum around healthy foods/eating and dental hygiene.

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 door to the pre-school was secured and had a bell entry system; this was controlled by the staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A wooden gate, in place at the top of the stairs, was secured with a flip type bolt mechanism that could be accessed only by the adults; this ensured children were safe when on the landing outside the Play-school room when accessing the bathroom. Children were observed being supervised while being safely escorted up and down the stairs by two staff members on the way to and from the garden.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted units, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established and observed.

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, waste and paper towel.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and during conversations with the staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service. It was confirmed by the staff there was no child attending the service with a specific medical care need.

Fire Safety:

All staff members, when asked, advised the inspector of the emergency evacuation routes used when practicing with the children; two routes are used, the Play-school room evacuate by the front stairwell and the Montessori room evacuate from the back stairwell leading directly from this room. All fire exits were clearly marked and not obstructed.

Outing:

A yearly outing takes place from the service and an outings policy is in place to guide practice.

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.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(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)

The registered ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms.

(2)

Not applicable as this was not a drop in service.

(3) (a),(b)

The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed 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.

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)
One staff member with paediatric first aid training was immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)

The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms and were immediately available for the children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
No person in the service had up to date first aid response (FAR) training, two certificates observed had expired October 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager/owner has now completed the FAR training.

Reminder added to diary for two months prior to expiry date to update FAR training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email confirmation of dates of FAR training completed.

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 25 has been met.

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)

A written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 18 October 2023.

(b)

A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced December 2022 and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 4 October 2023.

(4)

Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 34 children.