

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

24TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017LH502
----------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Spraoi Childcare
-------------------------	------------------

Address of Service:	Rathdaniel, Collon, Co. Louth
----------------------------	-------------------------------

Eircode:	A92 K276
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Cooney
-------------------------------------	---------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	15/05/2024
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle & S Cully
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Spraoui Childcare is one of four early years services operated by the registered provider in Co Meath and Co Louth having taken over ownership of this established service in July 2023. This service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 77 pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years on a full day, part time and sessional care basis. Eligible children are facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks each year, with starting times staggered to commence between 9 am and 9.15 am each weekday. Spraoi childcare is also registered to accommodate school aged children up to 12 years of age. The service is located over 3 floors in a purpose-built two -story premises located in Rathdaniel, Co. Louth. Four care rooms are provided on the premises, namely the Full day care Toddler Room, the Part time care Toddler Room, the ECCE 1 Room, and the ECCE 2 room. Ancillary accommodation includes a kitchen, sanitary areas and an office. A spacious outdoor play area is provided to the side of the premises.

Staffing

A service manager is employed who oversees the operational management of this service, working with a team of 13 staff members who work directly with the children, one staff member works specifically with the school aged children and a staff member is employed for cooking and catering duties. Two staff members are employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with children with additional needs, posts which are funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. The area manager was present in the service after the inspection had commenced. The registered provider was not present in the service during 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 area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 24, 25 and 26; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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 person in charge, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider failed to notify the Early Years Inspectorate of a change in circumstances in relation to the following as per the schedule 4 Form for Notification of Change in Circumstances:

- The name of the designated person in charge of this service did not correlate to the name detailed on the National Register.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) A change of circumstances has been made on 29th May and the new Designated Person in Charge of Collon facility has been appointed.

Preventive Action

Ensure that paperwork reflects any changes in circumstances and that all changes are applied for before any changes take place. Changes in person in charge will not take place until paperwork is in order.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Change in circumstances form received.

Summary Comment

A change of circumstances application was submitted and approved since the inspection. The registered provider has given assurances that change in circumstances applications will be submitted in advance of any changes taking place, this has been accepted.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

Spraoichildcare@gmail.com (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) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

The files for 15 staff members including the service manager and area manager were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for the 15 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 15 staff members whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files it was confirmed that no staff members had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 10 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service including the service manager and the area manager held an appropriate childcare qualification at level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the day of inspection and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the highest numbers of children were present in each care room during the inspection:

- In the Full day care Toddler room, there were 10 children aged 2 years 2 months to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Part time care Toddler Room, there were 12 children aged 2 years 4 months to 3 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the ECCE room 1 there were 16 children aged 4 years 4 months to 3 years 6 months being cared for by 3 staff members. The third staff member in this room was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio to support children with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In the ECCE room 2 there were 12 children aged 4 years 3 months to 5 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by the staff roster maintained at the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All 10 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

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

(1)(a) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service in relation to the following:

Basic needs:

- On the inspector's arrival to the service and throughout all the care rooms the children were observed to be involved in meaningful play-based activities engaging well with the Early year's practitioners and in turn the practitioners were observed to be warm, caring and responsive when interacting with the children.
- Breakfast of cereal and toast is available to children attending the service on a full day care basis. All children attending the service bring their morning snack with them from home. Dinner is cooked in the onsite kitchen each day with spaghetti with bolognese sauce and garlic bread served on the day of inspection. The practitioners sat with the children while they ate providing assistance and encouragement as required.
- The children's sanitary accommodation was located alongside all of the care rooms. Childrens nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required. The practitioners used the opportunity to engage warmly with the children chatting to them throughout the process. The children who were toilet trained were supported to use the bathroom independently with discreet support and supervision provided as required.

- The children attending the Full day care Toddler room who required to sleep were placed to sleep on stackable beds in the care room after they had their dinner. Comfortable rest areas comprising of suitably sized couches, cushions and floor mats were provided in all of the care rooms to allow children the opportunity to take a break from activities throughout the day.
- The personal care needs of the children were attended to promptly by the practitioners with the children reminded to wash their hands when necessary. Aprons were available for messy play activities and children were supported to wipe their own noses with support provided as needed.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The inspectors observed the children to be familiar with the practitioners. Children sought guidance and support from the early year's practitioners using their names in a relaxed and comfortable manner. During the inspection practitioners were observed acting as play partners with the children both indoors and outdoors. The staff members were frequently heard making reference to the children's siblings, parents, pets, cousins and other extended family members by name which nurtured links with family and home.
- The practitioners actively encouraged the children to play together and develop positive relationships with their peers. The practitioners in the Full day care toddler room were heard supporting children to resolve minor disputes by helping children to recognise and acknowledge the feelings of others. The children in turn were observed playing together, taking turns and helping each other. There was an emphasis on praise and encouragement to support the children's behaviour.
- A keywork system is in operation throughout the care rooms whereby practitioners conduct regular observations on a specific group of children and use this information to plan for the individual learning needs of each child.
- The practitioners in the care rooms were observed to work well as a team supporting each other in the care of the children, they regularly updated each other on the care of the children, transitions were well managed through the use of verbal prompts.

Physical and material environment:

- The care rooms were bright and welcoming, and the play materials and equipment were accessible on low-level shelving to facilitate children's independent choice and play.
- Each of the care rooms in the service were well resourced with a wide variety of play based equipment and resources suitable for the age and stage of the children attending the individual rooms. Interest areas

included well developed home areas with resourced kitchens, dress up materials, dolls with clothing and care equipment and haircare items all of which supported the children in their imaginary play experiences. Construction toys, a variety of transport toys, arts and crafts resources and a broad range of tabletop materials were available for the children to use. The children were observed to choose the resources they wanted to play with and were well supported by the practitioners present.

- Throughout all the care rooms sensory play materials were readily available to the children including large sand trays and tables with dried pasta.
- The children’s language development was supported through the provision of a wide range of books in the care rooms.
- An extensive well developed outdoor area was available to the side of the service. The area was divided into 3 separate sections which provided the children with the opportunity for active, adventurous, messy and social play. The service valued outdoor play with all of the children in attendance spending extended periods outside on the day of inspection and this was reflected in the resources available. An area adjacent to the care room on the ground floor was covered with a rigid plastic roof which enabled the children to be outside regardless of the weather. Additionally, a polytunnel which was also protected from the weather had recently been developed with a sand, mud and a separate gravel pit with digging equipment for the children to use, the children were provided with the opportunity for planting and had recently planted sunflower seeds which they were involved in caring for. A well-resourced mud kitchen enabled the children to extend their imaginary play experiences. Throughout the outdoor area space was provided for the children to be active in running, playing football and using the range of bicycles and cars provided.

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:

- Daily risk assessments of the care rooms and outdoor area were carried out to maintain safe environments and identify hazards. These were documented and on display in the care rooms.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of children's reach.
- Each care room had a set of laminated cards that clearly identified children by name and photography and included their dietary or allergy information. This supported staff to ensure safe practices regarding the handling of individual food requirements.
- The temperature of the care rooms was within the adequate range of 18°C - 22°C.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins to support effective hand hygiene procedures in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following outdoor and messy play. Children who were toilet trained were gently reminded, and assisted, when necessary, to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- The services nappy changing policy was observed to be implemented when practitioners changed children's nappies.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition and up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having or requiring medication on the day. However, detailed medical care plans were in place and accessible in the care rooms for children with medical care needs who may require access to medication during their preschool day.
- Anti-febrile medication and other medication relevant to specific children's care needs were stored out of children's reach in lockable medicine cabinets located within the care rooms.

Safe Sleep:

- Children over the age of 24 months who required sleep were provided with stackable floor beds and individual bed linen.
- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were being performed and documented on all sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were signposted and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the inspector's arrival to the service the external door leading into the service on the ground floor was open, this door then led to the Part time Toddler room door which was unlocked. This posed a risk for the children in attendance exiting the service unsupervised and for unauthorised persons to enter the service. It is acknowledged that the area manager attempted to repair the external door and the door of the Part time toddler room was secured thereafter.

Administration of Medication:

2. The services administration of medication policy was observed not to be followed as evidenced by medication administration forms that were reviewed in the ECCE 1 room:
 - The form did not include a section where a parent/guardian's signature would confirm that the parent was informed at collection of the dosage and last time of administration.
 - A form used following the administration of anti-febrile medication was incomplete, with no record of dosage administered, date of administration and no parent signature to confirm sharing of relevant information upon collection.
 - Another form used following the administration of anti-febrile medication was incomplete, with no date written on the consent page and no parent signature to confirm sharing of relevant information upon collection. This one form was used to record 2 events of administration of anti-febrile medication on the 09/04/24 and 10/04/24. According to the services Exclusion policy children with a fever should not attend until 48 hours free from symptoms.
 - A form used to give staff consent to administer an antibiotic and non-prescribed medicine was incomplete as there was no date of when consent was given and the time medication was last given by parent was not provided, and instead the time last administered by staff was written and no parent signature to confirm sharing of relevant information upon collection.

- It appeared that the parent consent forms for the administration of medication were completed by staff members, and this practice was confirmed by a staff member. The staff member explained that sometimes parents complete the form at drop off, but mostly staff complete the form, and the parents signs the form at collection. The services Medications policy states *“parents/guardians must fill in the medicine consent form of the service to authorise the administration of medication to their child. Staff cannot give medicine without this permission”*. The current practice is at variance to the services policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

- The door magnetic closer was fixed.

Administration of Medication:

- 2.-3. Manager has updated service’s administration of medication documents to add a column that clarifies on collection that the parent has been informed that emergency medication has been given.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

- On opening the service, the staff member must carry out a walk around and risk assessment to ensure all doors/ windows are in good working order. Any issues found on opening are communicated through the work group chat to inform staff on any issues found so preventive measures can be put in place to safeguard the children.

Administration of Medication:

- 2.-3. Staff have had more training on completing forms and the administration of medicines. Parents have also been informed that it is their responsibility to complete forms before antibiotics are given. On enrolment, parent packs are given with a medicine consent form for families to familiarise themselves with.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documented evidence was provided of the repairs to the door and the medication administration form.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

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.

Compliance Information

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students, or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspectors were requested to record their attendance on the premises and the purpose of their visit.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(a)(b) The service did not maintain accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection as evidenced in the following findings:

One child who was present in the Full day care toddler room on the day of inspection was not signed into the attendance register.

This posed a risk of children not being accounted for in the event of an evacuation emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(3)(a)(b) Staff are to sign children in role books immediately when a child enters the service.

Preventive Action

(3)(a)(b) Staff memo during staff meeting, has been given to all staff to remind them of the importance of signing children in as they enter the service.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance has been reviewed and accepted.

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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of a number of staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises.

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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 24/04/2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 28/08/2023 and the smoke detection system on 28/08/2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 50 children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.