

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017WD503		
Name of Service:	Respond Early Years Service, Lisduggan		
Address of Service:	Manor St. John's, Lisduggan, Co. Waterford		
Eircode:	X91 AW8P		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Rourke		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	15/01/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM 16
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.		
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	Not applicable		

Description of service

Respond Early Years Service Lisduggan is a community based childcare service operating and managed by Respond Support Childcare services, a subsidiary of Respond Housing Association. The service is located in a residential area on the outskirts of Waterford City. The service is full day care operating from 08:00hrs to 17:30hrs for children aged 1 year to 6 years of age Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme.

The premises are a community building and purpose built for childcare in 2007. The ground floor of the building accommodates a catering kitchen, six childcare rooms, three sleeping rooms, a rest room, a children's dining room, children's sanitary accommodation and two nappy changing rooms. The upper floor presently accommodates office space, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and further sanitary accommodation. There are ample storage rooms throughout the building for toys and equipment and a separate room for chemicals and cleaning agents. The outdoor play area is safely secured at the front of the building adjacent to the pre-school rooms.

Staffing

The service employs a manager who can be part of the staff complement if required, as well as a further nine childcare staff, and a part time cook.

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/safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels.

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play.

Regulation 22 – Food and drink.

Regulation 25 - First aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

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 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, 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.

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and the service had a named designated staff member who were able to deputise, if required.

(b) During the inspection, the manager was on the premises for the duration of the inspection and the registered provider was available to the inspector in the afternoon of the day of the inspection.

(c) The service had a detailed and concise flow chart indicating the governance arrangements and staff structure of Respond Childcare Services. This overview clearly and briefly outlining the roles, responsibilities and the lines of authority for service provision.

Since the last inspection on the 5 February 2021 and on review of the staff files, it was evident that four new staff members were employed to work with the children in the service. All four files for the new employees working directly with the children in the service were reviewed and the following was observed:

(2)(a) Seven written past employee references were available in respect of staff working in the service, with recorded validations of each reference.

(b) One written past reference was available from a reputable source in the case of a person, for whom past employee references was not available.

(c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána which were on file in respect of the four staff working directly with the children in the service.

(d) Police vetting certificates were not required for any of the staff working in the service.

(4) There was evidence that all staff employed in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or equivalent on the National Qualifications Framework.

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, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection the staff: child ratios were maintained as follows:

In the wobbler room there were 6 children aged 1 to 2 years of age being cared for by 2 staff members.

In the junior toddler room, there were 8 children aged 2 to 2.5 years of age being cared for by 2 staff members.
In the senior toddler room, there were 6 children aged 2.5 to 3 years of age being cared for by 1 staff member.
In the pre-school room there were 13 children aged 3 to 4 years of age being cared for by 3 staff members.

On the afternoon of the inspection the staff: child ratios were maintained as follows:

In the junior toddler room, there were 6 children aged 1 to 3 years of age being cared for by 2 staff members.
In the pre-school room there were 10 children aged 3 to 4 years of age being cared for by 2 staff members.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or
- shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
(a)
The childcare service was located on the ground floor of the premises. There were four childcare rooms in operation for the pre-school service in the morning and two childcare rooms in the afternoon. The building throughout was airy and spacious, with large corridors, and a spacious entrance lobby. The rooms in operation on

the day of inspection were comfortable and pleasant, each room had windows that provided ample natural daylight and ventilation. The pre-school room had double doors that opened directly onto the outdoor play area.

At the last inspection on 5 February 2021 the service had commenced replacing all plastic toys with high quality natural play materials and equipment. This was evident on the day throughout all childcare rooms with the introduction of large timber play materials and furniture such as home corners with pretend play cookers and an ample supply of kitchen play materials. The shelving in all of the playrooms throughout the service had supplies of quality small wooden play items such as jigsaws and shape sorters and fine motor play materials.

Three Junior rooms

The wobbler room, Junior toddler, and senior toddler rooms were clean and comfortable and laid out in a child-friendly manner to meet the needs of these age groups. Furniture in all these rooms was age appropriate to the children's height, size and development. There was a soft play area for younger children to crawl and experience floor play in each of these rooms. All rooms had plumbed stainless steel water troughs at the children's level for water play, gloop play, and handwashing.

The senior toddler room had dedicated a room adjacent to the care room totally for role play resourced with a wooden kitchen, dolls house, trolley, buggy and ample supplies of kitchen play materials. Sensory play boxes with accompanying play equipment were available in each room. On the day of inspection, the trays in the toddler rooms were filled with sand and children were observed playing with these in each room throughout the day of the inspection.

Preschool room

This was an extra-large room rectangular in shape. It was comfortable and pleasant. This room had interest areas defined with ample space for easy flow between the areas. This room was well stocked with paints, play dough, craft tools and a variety of child-sized musical instruments. On low level shelving there were baskets of farm animals and cars, as well as a dolls available for small world play opportunities.

All wall displays were pictorial or constructed with children's photographs. There was a family wall in each room, and birthday trains that showed each child's birthday with their photograph incorporated.

(b) The service had two designated sleep rooms adjacent to the junior care rooms. It was observed on the day that the sleep room off the Junior toddler care room was the main room in use to meet all the children's sleep needs. This room had six standard cots available for the children under two years to rest and supplies of stackable beds provided and available for the children over two years who may require a sleep. The sleep rooms had blinds fitted in order to provide an environment conducive to sleep. Soft areas with large, padded fall matting were available in corners of the junior rooms.

(2)
The service had a designated fully enclosed secure outdoor play space which had a soft matting and grass surface. On the day there was an ample supply of ride on toys such as tricycles, balance bicycles, scooters and tractors, as well as supplies of handheld trucks and diggers. The manager informed the inspector that there were plans to develop the outdoor space to include a digging area and a new mud kitchen space.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(b)The alcove space off the pre-school room was designed to be an area for the children to retreat to from the large playroom. On the day there was a two seated couch and no other equipment to make the area conducive to rest. It was evident on inspection that the area was being used as a cloak room for storage of children's bags and coats on a large piece of furniture that extended the length of the alcove. The room is presently painted a strong pink and has a large wall mounted white board with cartoon figures none of which are helpful to a settling environment.

As the main playroom caters for children from 08:00 to 17:30hrs it is essential that there is an area provided and available to the children that is favourable for rest. This area should be conducive to relaxation so as to offer children down time from the main play area. In order to create the atmosphere that is favourable for children's rest, features such as dimed lighting, calming colours or gentle murals and soft materials that could create delineation from the busy playroom.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response that the coat rack and cubbies have been relocated to another area. The alcove has been re-designed in order to foster a restful/quiet space. A large beanbag, soft-padded couch and a new soft mat was added to the space. A wall mounted light is sourced to create softer lighting. A curtain is sourced to section the area off and further define a quiet area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to the inspectorate on the 20 February 2024. of the completed rest area as described above.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted evidence to address the non-compliance of regulation 20 1 (b) that meets the requirements for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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

There was a full catering kitchen available on the premises, the kitchen had ample food preparation areas. The two meals and snacks were prepared and cooked from the onsite kitchen. The centre employed a part-time cook. The service had a healthy eating policy adhered to on the day of the inspection, this included and referenced food allergies.

A 3-week menu plan was available with two meals documented, one served in the morning and a second meal observed was in the afternoon on the day of the inspection, the second meal was pasta with mascarpone sauce. Parents supplied the snack for children attending sessional care.

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

Four staff members employed to work in the service had current First Aid Responder (FAR) Training. The manager stated that at least one staff member trained in first aid was available at all times in each of the childcare rooms during the operational hours of the service.

(2)

(a) There were 11 suitably equipped wall mounted first aid bags displayed outside each childcare room.

(b) All the first aid bags on the premises were suitably accessible and available.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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 in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 13 December 2023.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 9 February 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 13 December 2023.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedure with details of the measures to be taken in the event of a fire were displayed with a floor plan in each room.