

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017WW502		
Name of Service:	Little Explorers Childcare		
Address of Service:	The Meadows, Marlton Road, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A67 N156		
Name of Registered Provider:	Gina McGarry		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/07/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM 46
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow		
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and M. Redmond		
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

This privately owned full day care service was first opened in 2017. It is located in a single storey, purpose-built property in a large residential area outside Wicklow town. The service consists of five care rooms, a sleep room, staff room, laundry room and office. The service provides sessional, parttime and full day care. It is registered to provide care and education to pre-school children aged 0 to six years of age. The service operates from Monday to Friday between 07.00 am to 06.30 pm. (including a sessional ECCE service from 9.00 am to 12 midday for 38 weeks of the year). A school age service is also provided.

Staffing

There are currently twenty-seven people employed in the service and this includes the manager, assistant manager and the chef. The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending the service. There were eighteen staff present when the inspectors arrived at the service, thirteen staff were working directly with the children, three staff were with the afterschool children, there was the manager and the fulltime chef.

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/ premises and facilities. 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 inspectors 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

Following a discussion with the manager and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that twenty-seven adults are employed in the service, these files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The service had a person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of twenty-seven adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for twenty-seven adults employed.

(d)

International police vetting was available for six adults working in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-six staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

International police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The staff member has applied for their international vetting. We have rechecked all current CVs to check for any time a member of staff may have lived outside of Ireland and will ensure CV checks are more thorough going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d)

Photographic evidence of the acquired international police was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 9 (2)(d) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were 13 adults employed and present with 50 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)
The manager ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

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 main door to the premises was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All toys were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in each pre-school room was free from obstruction.
- A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous place in each pre-school room and around the pre-school.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all pre-school rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each pre-school room had access to a suitable sanitary area, with toilets and/or nappy changing facilities, running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers and named accordingly, cleaning and storing of soothers was included in the daily cleaning policy of the service.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all pre-school rooms and the nappy changing areas.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children after using the toilet.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were aware of the key principles required for safe sleep of young children. The sleep rooms were maintained at 20°C throughout the inspection.

There was written evidence that staff recorded the position, colour and breathing of children who are sleeping, in addition to recording the room temperature, at 10-minute intervals. This practice was observed during the inspection.

Cots were well spaced at 50cms apart and all cots had waterproof mattresses. The service had an adequate number of cots to accommodate the age profile of the children who required cots for safe sleep and low-level beds to accommodate the children who no longer slept in cots.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On the day of the inspection the adults observed carrying out a nappy change in Cocoon and Junior Hive rooms, failed to remove their gloves and apron until after the clean nappy was put on. This is not in line with the nappy changing procedure of the service and is not effective for infection control purposes.
2. In Cocoon room, following a nappy change and washing of the child's hands, then put the child on the floor and allowed the child to crawl around while they finished cleaning up. The child found a toy on the floor and began to play with it.
The staff member then brought the child back into the room, without re-washing the child's hands. This posed a risk of cross contamination to the child
3. On the day of inspection, the children in Cocoon were not observed having their hands washed before having their lunch. This is not effective for infection control purposes.
4. On the day of inspection in Junior Hive, a member of staff was observed, lifting the bin lid in the sanitary area with their hand and not using the foot pedal. Foot pedals bins are used for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Points 1 to 4

All staff have been given non-contact time to read up on our policies relating to handwashing, infection control and nappy changing.

We have repeated training in these areas and carried out surprise inspections also.

We have retrained all staff in these areas. This training has improved confidence and our inspections have been successful.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

A revised Infection Control policy and Nappy Changing procedure were submitted with the CAPA response.

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Summary Comment

The revised policies and procedures in addition to the staff training and spot checks by management on infection control practices when implemented will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 23 Infection Control points 1-4. These will be reviewed on next inspection.