

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018DS505
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Name of Service:	Once Upon A Time
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Address of Service:	Ballymount Retail Centre, Ballymount Little, Ballymount, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	68	PM	68
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
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Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke, E. Mulhern and S. Early O'Brien
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Once Upon a Time Ballymount is a privately owned full day care service that was first established in 2018.

The service is registered to provide care and education on Full Day Care basis, for children aged between one to six years of age.

The hours of operation are from 7.30am until 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.

The service is located on the ground floor of a fully adapted premises located in Ballymount retail business park, Dublin 24.

There are five care rooms: Wobbler room 1, Wobbler room 2, Toddler room, Pre-Montessori and Montessori room.

A separate sleep room is provided. An outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were seventeen adults present on the day of inspection; this included the manager and the relief chef.

Fourteen adults were rostered to work directly with the children attending the service.

On the day of inspection, additional staff members arrived, this included the Area manager, Operations manager and the Recruitment manager, who all helped with the care of the children in the rooms and with the inspection.

The registered providers do not work directly with the children.

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, managers, 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 the service employs sixteen adults, this includes the manager and full-time chef. In addition to these sixteen files, the files of four senior managers, one maintenance person and the relief chef were also reviewed.

(1)(a)

The manager has a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b)

The manager 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-two adults.

(c)

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

(d)

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

(4)

Nineteen 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the Behaviour Management policy of the service was reviewed. Following a discussion with staff, they stated they had read and understood the policy and described methods and approaches for managing challenging behaviour to demonstrate this.

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 service.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were fourteen adults present with sixty-eight children.

(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 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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1), (a), (g)-(k)

The manager ensured that a record in writing was kept of the above list of information in relation to the service.

(3)

The manager ensured that the above list of documents was open to inspection by an authorised person.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place

The atmosphere in the pre-school was happy, relaxed, friendly and child centred. Staff members were respectful and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service.

The relationships between the adults and children reflected a sense of belonging, inclusion, connectedness and diversity.

The pre-school room was equipped with low level child sized tables and chairs and materials and equipment were easily accessible on low level open shelving units in the room.

Interest areas included a home/kitchen corner, construction area, art area and rest area with library. Materials and equipment included paint, paper, crayons, play dough art and craft materials, blocks, puzzles, jigsaws, books, musical instruments, toy cars, animals, dolls, buggies, sensorial play table and natural materials.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the collection time.

(3)

There were no care practices or actions by the staff that would be considered disrespectful, degrading or physically harmful to the children in their care. Following a discussion with staff working in the service, they were

able to demonstrate that they knew and understood what constituted poor care practices in relation to children and what actions needed to be carried out if prohibited practices were ever observed.

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 service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- The kitchen was not accessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Foot pedal bins were available in both the sanitary areas and care rooms for the safe disposal of used paper towels and other items that required disposing of.
- Individual bed linen was provided for the children. Staff stated that bed linen was laundered weekly and individually stored for each child.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Hand washing following play and before morning snack time was observed.
- Nappy changing was observed on the day of inspection and the practices were fully in line with the Nappy Changing practices of the service.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes.
- Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.
- The sleep room temperatures were maintained at the correct temperature for sleep.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The manager was able to demonstrate that the children attending the service were adequately supervised throughout their day.