

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018DY194		
Name of Service:	Charlies Childcare		
Address of Service:	Unit 6a Newtown Park, Malahide Road, Coolock, Dublin 17		
Eircode:	D17 EP86		
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Fitzgerald		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	30/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM 6
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes & N. McEndoo		
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

Charlie's childcare is a privately run full day care service which opens 8am-5:30pm Monday-Friday. The service operates from a converted industrial unit and is comprised of three care rooms; two on the ground floor and one on the first floor. A kitchen and office are also located on the first floor. The service caters for 44 children aged 2-6 years.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 10 staff to work in the service including the person in charge and one staff member who works directly with school aged children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service.

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 an examination of compliance under Regulation 9; (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), Regulation 11; (1), (2), Regulation 19; (1)(a), Regulation 23, Regulation 25; (1), (2)(a)(b), Regulation 26; (1)(a)(b), (4). Regulation 29 was added during inspection in relation to an observed non-compliance. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under;
Regulation 19- Health, Welfare and Development of child,
Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,
Regulation 25- First aid,
Regulation 26- Fire Safety.

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment was assessed in relation to all staff working in the service and
Regulation 11- Staffing Levels was assessed in relation to all children in attendance.

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 registered provider, 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 registered provider ensured that there is a designated person in charge in the service and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy person in charge was present on the premises when the inspectors arrived in the service unannounced and was present for the duration of the inspection. The designated person in charge arrived in the service at 9:40am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c) A review of documentation and conversation with staff showed a clear management structure within the service.

(2) A review of the roster and conversation with staff showed that there are 10 staff currently employed in the service including the person in charge and one staff member who works with the school aged children. The files of these staff were reviewed along with the file of the registered provider.

(a) Sixteen written and verified references from a past employer were available in relation to 10 staff members.

(b) Five written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer in relation to 4 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff members.

(d) There was no evidence to show that any staff currently employed in the service required Police vetting.

(4) Evidence was available to show that 10 staff members who work directly with the children held 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. A staff member who worked with school aged children did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) A second written and verified reference was not available for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)(b) A second reference has been obtained and verified.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed by the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

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) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of children were working directly with the children on the day of inspection when 23 children were being cared for by 9 adults.

(2) Ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. The following was observed;

- In the starters room 8 children aged 2-3 years were being cared for by 2 adults.
- In the Preschool room 9 children aged 3-4 years were being cared for by 2 adults.
- In the Back room 6 children were being cared for by 2 adults.

A relief staff member, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to cover breaks and assist in rooms as required.

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:

(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.

Compliance Information

(j) Medication administration records were available in the children's files. These were observed to contain all necessary information and be completed in full.

(k) The service maintained a record of all accidents/ incidents which occurred. These records were observed to be completed in full and contained all necessary information.

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)

Basic needs:

- A variety of food was observed to be served to the children in the service for example at 10am children were observed to eat lunch which was brought from home followed by dinner at 11:30am which is provided by the service through an outside company. Lunch consisted of a variety of food such as rice cakes, pancakes, sandwiches, yoghurts, and fruit in line with the service healthy eating policy.
- Nappy changing was completed on a set schedule three times daily and as need to ensure the comfort of the child.

Physical and Material environment:

- Care rooms had a variety of toys and equipment to support a range of play activities. Rooms were clearly defined with materials grouped appropriately to support play experiences.
- Low furniture including table, chairs and shelving allowed the children to access toys and equipment and engage in mealtimes and tabletop activities comfortably.
- The children had access to an enclosed outdoor area which was observed to be used frequently on the day of inspection. The area has a synthetic grass surface and a range of toys to support children's development including a basketball hoop, a number of ride on toys and a sandpit.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with the children and were observed to engage with the children playing playdough and reading stories.
- Photos displays which showed the children's families and activities in the service promoted the children's sense of identity and belonging.

Non-Compliance Information

1. At dinner time children who did not eat the dinner offer were provided with food from their lunchboxes in the Starter room. Plates were not provided to these children to eat off, and they were observed to eat their lunch off the table. Children should be provided with appropriate tableware at mealtimes.
2. A number of battery-operated musical instruments in both the Starters room and Back room were not working. This limited the play value of these toys and the play experience for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Staff have been updated on the hygiene policy and the need to ensure plates, cups and cutlery are available for mealtimes.
2. All musical instruments have been checked and batteries replaced. Toy audits will be completed monthly to check for issues with toys.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed by the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 19.

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 to the service was secure on arrival and staff attended the door to allow access. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the premises.
- Care room and exit doors were adequately secured to prevent children leaving the rooms or service unsupervised.
- Windows were fitted with covers which prevented injury from falls.

- Cleaning products were stored appropriately out of reach of the children.
- Flexes were appropriately secured to prevent injury.

Infection Control:

- Records of toy cleaning were available in the care rooms and had been completed to date.

Administration of Medication:

- A written care plan was available for a child who had an allergy to a specific food product and the child's medication was stored safely on a high shelf in the care room immediately available to the staff if required. Discussion with staff showed that they were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing procedure observed was not in line with best practice or the service policy. A staff member was observed to wear one apron for up to 3 nappy changes and handwashing of the staff member or child's hands was not observed to be routinely completed following nappy changing posing an infection control risk.
2. The nappy changing mats in both nappy changing areas in the service were observed to be torn with foam exposed. This posed an infection control risk as the mat could not be adequately cleaned while the exposed foam posed a potential choking hazard to the children.
3. The nappy changing unit in the Starters room appeared unclean with visible dirt and debris present. This posed an infection control risk.
4. The pedal operated bin in the nappy changing area of the Starters room was inaccessible due to the presence of a set of steps; staff were observed using their hand to open the bin to dispose of nappies presenting an infection control risk.
5. A number of items were observed to be stored in the sanitary area in the Starters room including a children's play tent, art supplies and playdough making equipment. This posed a risk of cross infection.
6. Toilet roll was not hygienically dispensed in one cubicle of the toilets in the Preschool room where toilet roll was observed to be stored on the cistern. This presents an infection control risk due to the number of people handling the cardboard insert in the toilet roll.

- Blue roll used for cleaning the nappy changing mats was not hygienically dispensed presenting an infection control risk due to the number people handling the cardboard insert in the roll.

Fire Safety:

- A rubber glove was observed to be in place over a smoke detector in the stairwell adjacent to the Back room. This could prevent staff being alerted to a fire in the area and impede the timely evacuation of the children in an emergency. The registered provider removed the glove following the feedback meeting while inspectors were present in the service.
- Attendance records were not recorded in a timely manner to ensure the safety of the children in the event of a fire emergency. The following was recorded;
 - A child aged 9 years old was present in the Starters room at 9:38am when Inspectors conducted an initial walk through of the service. Staff advised that the child had been present in the service from 9:30am and was observed to leave the service at 10:17am; a review of the attendance record and discussion with staff showed that the child's attendance was not documented within the service.
 - A review of the roll book and attendance records on the software application at 9:50am showed that the attendance of two children had not been recorded in the Starters room. Both children were present in the room when the Inspectors entered the care room initially at 9:38am.
- Records showed that fire drills were not conducted monthly in the service for example there was no recorded fire drill in January, June, August and October 2022 and January, March, April and May 2023. A note on the record stated that fire drills could not be conducted in April or May 2023 due to building works in the carpark outside the service. Regular fire drills ensure the timely and safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- A nappy changing demonstration was carried out. All staff have been provided with an updated nappy changing policy and step by step instructions have been displayed.
- New changing mats were purchased. Additional mats have been purchased to ensure they can be changed as needed. This has been added to a weekly checklist.
- Nappy changing unit was cleaned. Staff were provided with a copy of the infection control policy and non-contact time has been allocated for cleaning sanitary areas.

4. The pedal bin was moved to ensure access. Signage has been displayed reminding staff to use the pedal to operate the bin.
5. The toilet area has been cleared out. Signage has been displayed to remind staff to keep the area clear.
6. A toilet roll holder has been installed. Toilet roll holders will be checked daily and have been added to the managers morning checklist.
7. Hand towel dispensers have been refilled. Hand towel dispensers will be checked daily and have been added to the managers morning checklist.

Fire Safety:

8. The glove was removed immediately. Checking of the smoke/heat detectors has been added to the managers checklist.
9. Staff have been reminded of the importance of recording attendance in a timely manner. A visitor record sheet has been implemented in all care rooms for times when other children or visitors are present.
10. Staff will ensure a fire drill is carried out each month. A fire assembly point has been added to the garden area for use during fire drills when the carpark is unsafe.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed by the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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 review of the roster and First Aid Responder (FAR) certification for two staff showed that the registered provider had ensured that a person trained in FAR was immediately available to the children during the opening hours of the service.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored safely out of reach of the children and easily accessible to staff during the service opening hours.

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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was maintained. The record showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 11th November 2022 while the smoke alarms were last serviced on 26th July 2022.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were displayed throughout the service in care rooms and communal areas.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The registered provider did not ensure the service was cleaned, repaired, and maintained as required. The following was observed;

- In the sanitary area in the Preschool room the tiles on the floor were observed to be worn leaving a rough surface which would be difficult to clean. Paint was observed to be peeling and flaking on the door frames diving the toilet cubicles and the seal on the tiles beside the sink was peeling off with dirt visible around it.
- Walls and doors through the service were not painted to a level which provided an easily wipeable surface and handprints and dirt were visible. Evidence was available to show the painting is currently being completed in the service with walls and doors along the upper corridor outside the starters room appearing freshly painted.
- The banister on the stairs adjacent to the Back room had not be painted to allow an easily wipeable surface and handprints and dirt were visible.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d)

- The tiles have been painted with non-slip tile paint.
- The seal on the tiles has been replaced by maintenance staff.
- The walls are currently being painted as this was in process on the day of inspection.
- The banister has been painted with a washable paint.

Staff will monitor the building and report any areas in need of upkeep to maintenance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed by the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29.