

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018GY514
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Name of Service:	Spraoui Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Stradbally North, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway.
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Eircode:	H91 DP7K
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Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	49
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and A. Mc Carthy.
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

Spraoui Early Learning Centre was established in 2018, in a privately owned childcare facility in Clarinbridge, County Galway. The service offers a full day, part time, sessional programmes of care from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 6 pm. The programme of care is facilitated for children ranging in age from 0 to 6 years of age. During the inspection four care rooms were in operation. The service has three designated sleep rooms and a designated kitchen where the hot meals are reheated. The service also has a designated utility, staff kitchen and dining area in a separate building. A secure outdoor play area for children's play, exploration and exercise during the day is located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

On the 24 September 2024, the deputy manager, two relief staff and 7 members of staff were working directly with the children. The manager and area manager arrived after the inspector's arrival. The registered provider was not present on the day of 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:

- Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4),
- Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (19)(1)(b), (3),
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
- Regulation 27 – Supervision

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, service manager, deputy manager, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b) The manager and a person to deputise were available throughout the inspection.

(c) During the inspection the inspectors observed that a clear management structure was in place in the service. The area manager and the service manager were available, and a person was assigned to deputise if the managers were not available.

The staff roster and a display of the service staff and management at the entrance to the service demonstrated the lines of authority and accountability in the service. The specific roles and responsibilities of each employee was detailed in the recruitment policy and information was displayed at the entrance to the service. The adults working in the service demonstrated an awareness of their roles and responsibilities upon discussion with the inspectors.

All thirteen staff files were reviewed including the registered providers:

- (2) (a) Twenty-three written and validated references from past employers were available.
- (b) Three written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 13 adults working in the service.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 9 adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4) Twelve adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging at Level 5 and 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (7)(a) Evidence was available through staff training records that they had received induction training on the following policies:
- Policy on Behaviour Management.
 - Supervision policy.
 - Complaints policy.
 - Induction & Staff Training policy.
 - Risk Management Policy.

A supervision policy was in place in the service and the manager confirmed that meetings are held every three months with staff and during the inspection the manager was observed to visit each room and communicate with staff regarding break cover and other information. The adults in each care room demonstrated a knowledge of the practices outlined in the service's policies and procedures.

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) During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) The ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the preschool rooms. Ten adults cared for the fifty children attending the service in the morning and Ten adults cared for forty-nine children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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

- (19)(1)(b) Suitable and appropriate care practices for the age and stage of development was observed throughout the inspection.
- Adults were observed to be attentive and responsive to children's care needs throughout the day. Children were supported when completing tabletop tasks, hand washing, at toileting, nappy changing, meal times, identifying their need for sleep and while playing outdoors.
 - Children were observed to not be rushed at completing tasks, mealtimes or moving in or out of the outdoor area. This in turn allowed for children to transition easier with the daily schedule throughout the day.
 - Although there was structure to the day and a daily programme of activity this allowed for a balance of both child led and adult led activities.
 - Information and observations on each child's overall development was communicated via a multimedia application.
 - The older children were encouraged to take the lead, children were observed to clear away their crockery and plates after mealtimes.
 - Children had the opportunity to explore and play in the outdoor areas and the adults were observed to have in engage and communicate with the children.
 - Children were shown how to emotionally self-regulate and find positive solutions when minor arguments arose over a toy with another child.
- (3) The staff demonstrated a knowledge of the service's behaviour management policy and confirmed the completion of children first training and training on the behaviour management policy.

The managers and staff explained the practices that unacceptable in the service which included prohibited practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physical harmful or neglectful to children.

Adults were observed comforting and supporting new children that were settling into the service. Adults were able to demonstrate that they were aware of children's routines, likes and dislikes.

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

Infection Control:

- Correct nappy changing procedures were observed in line with the service policy and best practice.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Eight mattresses in the two sleep rooms were worn, not firm and discoloured and in need of replacement this practice is at variance with the safe sleep procedure in the service.
2. Three mattress covers were discoloured and stained which posed a risk of cross infection in the two sleep rooms.
3. Soother were collectively stored together. The soothers were not sterilised, individually labelled or stored in an individual container in the Hippo room this may pose as a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. & 2. The eight mattresses were replaced and new sheets purchased, regular quality checks will be carried out on mattresses and sheets.
3. Staff have been trained of the importance of having soothers stored separately, labelled with child's name and sterilised frequently.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- 1.&2. Photographic evidence of new mattresses and sheets were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of soothers stored in individual containers was submitted.

Summary Comment

1.,2. & 3. The evidence submitted was reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and has been deemed to have met the regulatory requirement of this part of the Regulations.

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

During the inspection the manager and staff ensured that the preschool children were supervised at all times in the indoor and outdoor environment.

Following a recent incident, staff in each care room had received training in the policies of the service and they were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supervising children during the operation of the service.

The adult child ratio was maintained in each care room, and this was evidenced by the staff rota.

The staff ensured that children were supervised during mealtimes and while children used the sanitary areas and during nappy changing procedures. The layout of the facility allowed staff to supervise children by sound and by sight.