

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019MH005
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Hi-5 Childcare
-------------------------	----------------

Address of Service:	Brackrainey Manor, Enfield Road, Longwood, Co. Meath
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	A83H019
-----------------	---------

Name of Registered Provider:	Andreia Nascimento Bittencourt
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
----------------------	---------------------

Date of Inspection:	28/08/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	14
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Hi-5 Childcare is a privately owned childcare facility which provides full day care, part-time and sessional care to pre-school children from 0 to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) and operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm.

The premises is purpose build consisting of the following rooms:

The Cocoon room facilitates the care of children from 1 to 2 years.

The Caterpillar room provides care for children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

The Butterfly pre-school room caters for children from 3 to 6 years.

Other facilities include a sensory room, office, kitchen, cot rooms, and sanitary facilities.

A large outdoor space was located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, deputy person in charge, 7 childcare staff, 3 school aged staff and a cook. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, deputy person in charge, 6 childcare staff and 1 school aged staff who started work at 1pm and a 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/ 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 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was displayed in the entrance hallway in the service.

(2) Fourteen staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b) Twenty eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 14 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 4 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All pre-school childcare staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6) (a) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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) On the morning of the inspection there was, a manager, deputy manager, 6 childcare staff working directly with the 28 children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

The **Cocoon** room had 2 adults providing care to 7 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years, 6 children were attending on a full day care basis with 1 child settling in and remaining in the service from 9 to 12 am.

The **Caterpillar** room had 2 adults providing care to 8 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 4 years, 5 children were attending on a full day care basis while 3 children were attending on a sessional basis.

The **Butterfly** room had 3 adults providing care and education to 13 children ranging in age from 3 to 5 years, 3 children were attending on a full day care basis with 10 children attending on a sessional basis.

The manager was available to provide relief to the rooms as needed.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present 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-

(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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- In the Cocoon room any child who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Children were put down to sleep when they were tired. The remainder of the children who did not avail of a morning nap were placed to sleep at the service's designated sleep time after morning snack.
- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative.

In the Cocoon room the theme of the month was “Colours” with the children’s artwork displayed to reflect this theme. Children in the Caterpillar and Butterfly rooms enjoyed artwork, colouring and painting in a picture of their “first day at preschool”, which they took home. At circle time staff encouraged the children to introduce themselves to each other to help children to settle in.

- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required. Children and staff were heard happily chatting to each other as the children ate.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic and messy outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with children being given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children. The staff members were observed promoting positive behaviour and supporting children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials.
- Individual care plans were available for children who required additional support and were adapted to suit the individual child. Parents were updated by an electronic device regarding activities pertaining to their children throughout the day. Overall, the children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

- 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-

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The cot room off the Cocoon room had 7 standard cots for the younger children requiring sleep. The older children were placed to sleep on stackable beds in the Cocoon room. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest, if needed.

(3)(a) The outdoor space to the rear of the premises was enclosed by walls and railings with 2 secured gates. This area was divided into 3 spaces by fencing and had a combination of grass and a soft tiled surface.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Interest areas included home and kitchen corners, construction areas, arts and crafts, rest spaces and library corners. The play materials and equipment were stored on low-level shelving to facilitate the children to select and replace items of interest independently. Play materials were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children in the individual care rooms .
- Some of the equipment in the large outdoor grass space for the older children included a large wooden activity unit with slides and swings, mud kitchen, activity trays, climbing frame, playhouse and tyres. Two partially sheltered areas permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.
Equipment in the outdoor space off the Cocoon room included ride on/push along toys, activity unit with a slide and swing chair, play house, mud kitchen, sand table and a partially sheltered area.
The area off the Caterpillar room was used for physical activities with equipment brought out as needed
These children also had access to the large outdoor green space.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There was a sand pit with no sand in the partially sheltered outdoor spaces in the large grass area.
2. The mud kitchen in the outdoor space for the Cocoon care room had no play equipment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The sand pit has been filled with fresh sand, and it is now fully prepared for the children's play and learning activities.
2. New equipment has been purchased for the mud kitchen to ensure it is fully equipped for the children's use. A designated staff member has been assigned to oversee the upkeep of outdoor play equipment and supplies. A weekly maintenance check will be completed and recorded to ensure all equipment and supplies are available and in good condition.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the following:

Sand pit with sand.

Mud kitchen with play equipment.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances.

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

The service had a 3-week menu plan with a variety of food ranging from meat, poultry and fish all prepared onsite by the cook. On the day of inspection breakfast was served between 07:30 and 08:30am consisting of a choice of cereals and toast. A morning snack was served at 11am consisting of wraps or brown bread with ham, cucumber slices and banana. Children in the Caterpillar and Butterfly rooms brought their own morning snack from home. Dinner was served at 2pm which was fish, vegetables, mash potatoes and gravy. An alternative dish of pasta was also available. An afternoon snack of homemade chocolate chip buns, crackers and fruit was served at 4pm. Water

was the drink of choice. Additional snacks were available for the children who remained in the service up to closing time if required.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The door to the service was secured with a buzzer system and the outdoor areas were enclosed with secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the 3 outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.
- An indoor/outdoor risk assessment were conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained on a daily basis.
- All pacifiers were stored in individual boxes in the care rooms.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- A thermometer was available in the cot room to ensure the temperature of the room was maintained between 18 to 22 °C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern on each child was recorded at 10 minutes intervals.
- Children sleeping on stackable beds were supervised at all times.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- The fire assembly point was located at the pillar to the entrance of the car park.
- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the Butterfly room, one of the low-level units did not have cushioned corners to prevent a child from getting injured.

Infection Control:

2. In the Cocoon room the surface of the wooden gate which divided the care room from the dining area did not provide a smooth surface for cleaning.
3. One of the bins in the Butterfly room was not foot operated, children therefore had to handle the bin which is an infection control risk.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Cushioned corner protectors have now been placed on all low-level units. A regular safety checks will be conducted to ensure all furniture and equipment are safe.

Infection Control:

2. A new gate is now in place with a smooth surface for adequate cleaning.
3. The bins in the Butterfly room have been replaced with foot pedal operated bins.

A regular safety checks will be conducted to ensure all surfaces are smooth to permit adequate cleaning and that all bins are suitable for the disposal of contaminated waste.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of cushioned corner protectors on low-level units.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the following:

A gate with a smooth surface for cleaning.

Foot pedal operated bin.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 22/07/2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment which were last serviced on the 04/03/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 43 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.

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*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

(d) In the Butterfly room the cloth dolls were visibly dirty, the couch at the rest/relaxation area was heavily stained. The children chairs were visibly stained.

In the Caterpillar room the cloth dolls were visibly dirty, the toy kitchen was heavily stained.

Some of the containers for storage of toys in both rooms were visibly dirty.

(e) One of the toilets in the sanitary accommodation in the hallway had no seat which did not provide comfort and stability to a child when using the toilet.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(d) The service had a deep clean with all effected areas and items cleaned or replaced. A system is now in place for regular cleaning of furniture and play equipment which have now been included on the cleaning schedule.

(e) A toilet seat has been ordered for the toilet. A regular safety checks will be conducted to ensure all the equipment in the sanitary area is available.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the following:

Clean cloth dolls.

Clean cover on couch.

Cleaning schedule

Receipt for purchase of toilet seat.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances.