

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020FL002				
Name of Service:	Just Like Home				
Address of Service:	Unit 2 Block B, Post Office Road, Lusk, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	K45 E290				
Name of Registered Provider:	Natalia Baczek				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	27/05/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>21</td> <td>PM</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </table>	AM	21	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6				
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle & S Taaffe				
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

Just Like Home is an early years' service located in Lusk, Co Dublin and is registered to accommodate pre-school children from 1 to 6 years of age on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis. The service is registered to operate from 7.15am to 6pm each weekday, with eligible pre-school children facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am – 12.00pm daily for 38 weeks annually. The service is located in a ground floor converted commercial property with 3 care rooms in operation, namely the Wobbler room, the Toddler room and the Preschool room. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service employs 6 staff members all of whom work directly with the children including a service manager who coordinates the day-to-day operational management of the service and provides support across all care rooms as required. The registered provider is not rostered to work in the service but is present regularly in a supportive capacity.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 26; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 24 and 30. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider arrived in the service during the inspection and remained in the service for the remainder of the inspection.

The files for 7 staff members including the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b) Two written references were available for the registered provider.

Two written and appropriately validated references were available for 6 members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 7 staff members including the registered provider whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 5 adults who had lived outside the Irish state as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that that the registered provider and 6 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) Following a review of the staff files and a previous staff roster it was apparent that 1 staff member who works directly with the children had commenced working in the service in advance of Garda vetting procedures being available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(3) One of the staff members was employed in March and for the first few days induction training of policies and procedures was done as stated in the checklist for new staff members and as it was marked in the staff roster.

Preventive Action

(3) Management will ensure that recruitment policy is followed, and new staff members have all relevant documents before commencing work at the creche. There is a checklist in each staff member's file to check if all documents required are available. This will be monitored by the service manager.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted.

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 period of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the day of inspection, the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

- In the Wobbler room there were 5 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years being cared for by 1 adult.
- In the Toddler room there were 5 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In the Preschool room there were 11 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 7 months being cared for by 2 and, sometimes, 3 adults.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by 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.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. Eleven registration forms were reviewed and found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

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:

- Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasant experience with children given time to enjoy their meals. The service provides all meals and snacks to children attending the service on a full day basis and children attending the service on a sessional basis bring their morning snack with them from home. Throughout the care rooms the children's water bottles were accessible to them on low level shelving for them to take if thirsty at any time.
- The children's personal care needs were promptly attended to, nappy changing occurred at scheduled times throughout the day and more frequently as required. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently and gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards. In the Wobbler room bibs were placed on the children prior to eating and in all rooms the children's hands and faces were cleaned with individual freshly laundered face cloths after they ate.
- Younger children in the service were facilitated to sleep as needed with most children who required a nap doing so after lunch. The children attending the Wobbler room and the Toddler room were placed to sleep in either cots or floor mats in the Wobbler room after they had their dinner. Rest areas were provided in the care room for children to take a break as desired during the day.
- An enclosed outdoor area was located to the rear of the service where all the children in attendance had the opportunity to spend time on the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff in the service were observed to have warm and caring interactions with children. Staff spoke positively about the children and demonstrated familiarity with their needs and personalities. The staff members were observed supporting children when minor disputes arose by talking gently with children, at their level, to help them find a solution or comfort one another.
- Children's artwork and photographs were on display in all of the care rooms which supports the children to feel recognised and valued in the service.
- In the Wobbler room and Toddler room a written record was completed for each child to record relevant information that parents would receive at the end of the day, such as meals, sleep times and activities or events.
- The atmosphere between the staff members and children was relaxed and calm and the children were observed to seek out staff members for guidance and support as they required it.

Physical and material environment:

- Throughout the care rooms play resources and equipment were available on low level shelves for the children to take play equipment and materials as they chose which encouraged independence and facilitated the children's choice.
- Identifiable areas of interest were provided in the care rooms and included home areas with supportive play equipment including play crockery, cooking utensils and real food packaging to enable the children to extend their play. Construction areas, transport toys, arts and crafts material in addition to a range of tabletop resources were available to the children in the three care rooms.
- The outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed by the walls of the premises and tall fencing. The surface consisted of artificial grass and play equipment included self-propel cars, tricycles, portable rocking toys, hula hoops, a plastic playhouse, two wall mounted sensory boards with a range of tactile squares and switches, and a wooden outdoor kitchen positioned under a small lean-to structure covered by rigid plastic sheeting.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There was no supportive equipment available at the play kitchen in the outdoor play area to enable the children to extend their play.
2. In the Toddler room and Wobbler room a number of books that were available to the children were torn and in poor condition.
3. The dress up materials in both the Toddler room and the Preschool room were stored on top of each other in a bag and were therefore not accessible or inviting to the children to use.
4. Sensorial materials such as sand, water, compost, dried rice or dried pasta were not available in the Preschool Room to facilitate sensorial play experiences for the children in attendance, furthermore there were no sensorial play equipment available for the children in the outdoor play area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

1. There has been equipment provided for the outdoor kitchen play area.
2. Staff members were advised to check all the books and remove those in poor condition.
3. Due to the limit of space staff member in cooperation with the service manager have decided to do the *dressing up* area on one of the shelves and store all dressing up clothes in the bag.

4. There sensory materials were provided to the Preschool room, due to the space limit in the room, all sensory materials (sand, pasta, etc) was stored in the hall and brought to the classroom once required. Staff member in cooperation with manager have created a sensory area in the Preschool room. There is also sensory equipment provided in the outdoor play area.

Preventive Action

Management will provide more sensory materials in the outdoor area and more equipment will be provided for the sensory play in the Preschool room – such as pasta/rice/sand/water/playdough. Manager advised staff members working in the preschool room that sensory play is essential for children. This will be monitored by the service Manager if the sensory play is available for the children on the daily basis. Manager in cooperation with staff members will ensure there is enough equipment available in the kitchen area in the garden. Also, more resources were provided since the inspection. This creche is working with Better Start. There was a goal set up by the Early Years Specialist to improve service's inside and outside learning environment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of improvements in learning environments including addition of sensory materials.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child has been reviewed and accepted.

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 door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at all the sinks throughout the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy play and outdoor play.
- There was a lined, lidded and pedal-operated bin in the sanitary accommodation where nappy changing took place.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- On discussion with the inspectors, staff members described safe sleep practices. Sleep checks were carried out on all sleeping children every 10 minutes, noting each child's position, colour and breathing pattern.

Fire Safety:

- The records demonstrated that fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The children attending the Wobbler room did not have their hands washed after their nappies were changed after dinner.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

1. The staff member working in the Wobbler room was advised to follow hand washing procedures and wash children's hands after nappy changing time.

Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Hand washing procedures was brought to staff member's attention and displayed in the nappy changing area and each room. This will be monitored on the daily basis by the service manager.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

(1) With the exception of the non-compliance listed below the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child was recorded on a daily basis.

(3)(a) All persons other than those listed above in (3)(a)(i) – (iv) were approved access to the service by an employee prior to entry.

(b) Visitor details were entered into the visitors' book, and the inspector was requested to sign in and out of the service by an authorised employee.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Two children who were present in the Preschool room on the day of inspection were not documented as being present in the attendance register on their arrival to the service at 8.55am and at 9.53am respectively, as required. Instead, a staff member entered these children's attendance into the register sometime after 11.20am.

This posed a risk of the children not being counted under the daily supervision routines or in the event of an evacuation emergency. This non-compliance was also identified during the last inspection on 04/12/2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) Staf members were reminded to follow the procedures of dropping and collecting children and to mark the time straight away after children's arrival.

Preventive Action

(1) Manager will monitor if the time in and out for each child is marked immediately after their arrival time. Policies and procedures were brought to staff member's attention.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance has been reviewed and accepted.

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 person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of 3 staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

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 fire fighting 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that the most recent fire drill was conducted on 16/04/2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 15/02/24 and smoke alarms were serviced on the 30/01/2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (b) safe and secure,
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated, and ventilated
 - (d) cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required,

Compliance Information

(b) The building was observed to be safe and secure. Access to the building was gained via an intercom system at a secure door on the ground floor which accessed a secure internal lobby. This reduced the risk of an unauthorised adult entering the premises or a child leaving the premises unsupervised.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) There was a strong foul odour in the nappy changing area indicating that the ventilation system in place in the nappy changing room was inadequate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(c) Service provider will check the ventilation system and make sure it is working properly. Due to creche renovation there will be new ventilation system in place.

Preventive Action

(c) As mentioned on the follow up meeting, Manager and staff members are regularly opening the changing unit door and classroom windows for the ventilation. This is done on the regular basis throughout the day when children are not in the classrooms.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 29 - Premises has been reviewed and accepted.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) There was adequate clear floor space available for the safety, play and movement of the 5 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years who were accommodated on a part-time or full day care basis in the Wobbler room which measured 15.8 square metres, and for the 5 children aged 2 years to 3 years who were accommodated on a part-time or full day care basis in the Toddler room which measured 23.24 square metres.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) A significant risk has been identified in relation to the availability of floor space for the play and movement of children attending the Preschool room which measures 22.3 square metres. On the day of inspection there were 11 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 7 months being cared for in this room. Based on the numbers and age range of the children attending, 32.3 square metres of clear floor space was required for their safety, play and movement.

The available floor space allowed for a maximum of 9 pre-school children aged 2-6 years attending on a part-time or full day care basis, as opposed to the numbers of children accommodated in this room on the day of inspection and on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2) There is a *Key person policy* in place that allows to split the preschool children into two smaller groups and having more space for play and movement. As discussed on the follow up meeting this creche is expanding this year and there will be more space available in each room. Service provider will ensure there is appropriate number of children in the group due to the square metres.

Preventive Action

(2) As stated on the follow up meeting two of the children from Preschool room are leaving soon and the number of children in the afternoon will drop to 9. Also, the creche is expanding this year and there will be more space provided for children in each room. Plans for renovations of the existing part of the building were introduced to inspectors on the day of inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Floor plans submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has stated that the number of children attending the Preschool room will reflect the floor space available. The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements has been reviewed and accepted.