

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LK005
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Name of Service:	Hope Childcare
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Address of Service:	Rathwood, Murroe, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 Y6T8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sherene Powell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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

This is a registered private service established in 2020. There are two buildings on the premises, Wing A is the crèche facility and Wing B is a two-storey building providing sessional and full day care to preschool children.

The crèche facility is a single storey premises that has 2 playrooms in operation, the Toddlers and the Baby rooms, 2 sleep rooms, sanitary facilities for the children and adults, an office and a kitchen area.

The two-storey premises have 2 playrooms, playroom 1 located downstairs and playroom 2 upstairs to facilitate the older children attending for the sessional and full day care. Each playroom has its own sanitary facilities for the children.

The service has a number of outdoor spaces with a variety of surfaces such as grass, tarmac, and all-weather areas.

There is a school aged service available in the service.

Staffing

There are 6 staff employed to work in the service. The registered provider does not work in this service.

All the staff working with the preschool children hold a qualification in childcare.

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, 19, 21, 24, 25, and 26; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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 had a designated person in charge and a named person who could deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present in the service on the day of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) All staff files were viewed on the day and the following information was in place:

(a) There were written, past employer's references available in respect of the adults working in the service, with recorded validations where required.

(b) There were references available from sources other than past employers on file where required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of all the adults in the service.

(d) Police vetting was available for the adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) The adults working directly with the children in the service all held an award in Early Childhood Care & Education ranging from Level 5 to 8

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 had ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working with the children.

The adult child ratios was correct on the day of the inspection.

(2) There were 6 staff working directly with 26 preschool children in the morning and 4 staff working with 16 preschool children in the afternoon.

The person in charge was available to cover meals breaks and other additional activities identified by the staff working in the playrooms.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

Healthy eating was promoted throughout the service. The hot meals were supplied by an outside company, these were reheated and served to the children each day. Snacks such as scones, pancakes and fruit were prepared fresh each day and were served at regular intervals. Food trolleys delivered meals and snacks to each room at the service. The children's drinking cups were accessible to the children in each of the rooms.

A stew with meat, carrots and mash potato was served at dinner time on the day of the inspection and children were all offered extra helpings of dinner if they were hungry. Staff in each room had supplies of snacks if children required more food between mealtimes.

Sanitary accommodation was located next to each room in the service. Nappy changing facilities were provided next to the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. All toiletries for the children were safely stored and clearly labelled and were located within easy reach of the staff. The nappy changing policy was clearly displayed next to the changing units.

Rest areas with soft seating, soft floor coverings, cushions and blankets were accessible in each of the rooms at the service.

The sleep rooms were located between the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. There was a sufficient number of standard cots accessible to facilitate children to rest when needed. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all sleep checks were recorded on the digital equipment. The children over 2 years who required a sleep had access to low level beds with sheets and blankets provided in the Toddlers playroom.

The service supported children to form and sustain positive relationships with their adult carers with the same staff present with the children each day. All staff in each room were observed being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in helping when invited by the children. Lots of social conversations between staff and children was evident in all areas of the service.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Wobbler and Toddler playrooms had a calm atmosphere with lots of soft floor space for staff and children to relax and play. Adult seating was available for staff to hold children while feeding and comforting them. Low level tables and chairs were used at mealtimes and for many tabletop activities. Low level climbing frames encouraged children to further challenge their gross motor skills.

The preschool rooms had environments that were flexible and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences and interests of the children.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. Clearly labelled individual spaces and coat hooks for each child's belongings were not available to support organised access and independence for the children. In the Wobbler playroom all belongings were up on hooks near the sink that were too high and inaccessible to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

The registered provider has stated in the corrective and preventive action(CAPA) document that :

1.Coat hooks have been moved to children’s height for easier access. Clearly labelled individual spaces for each child’s belongings are now available to support organized access and independence for the children.

The management will ensure that all children’s coat hooks are fixed to suit children’s heights. Management will ensure that individual spaces for each child’s belongings are clearly labelled to support organised access and independence for the children.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA document.

Summary Comment

The actions as outlined by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 19 Basic Needs point 1.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The equipment and materials to facilitate all types of play and learning, to engage children and keep them active and involved, whilst supporting and encouraging each child to experiment and explore was insufficient.

1. The variety and quantity of natural open-ended materials were inadequate in the indoor and the enclosed outdoor environments on the day. No access to water play, play dough, paints and easels.
2. Natural materials such as twigs, stones and shells were not available to the children for sensory and imaginative play. Access to the garden area was not allowed as the ground surface was wet.
3. A sand tray located in the storage area became available when staff were prompted to bring it into the Toddlers playroom. The quantity of pasta play available in the outdoor area for imaginative and messy play was insufficient for the 17 preschool children present.

4. Appropriate trays to facilitate open ended play were insufficient. The tray in the outdoor area was positioned on an old rustic table that was in a poor state and not safe.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated in the CAPA that :

Points 1, 2, 3, and 4.

A water table was purchased for the Toddler room and will be kept in the playroom alongside the sand tray where it is accessible to the children throughout the day.

A sand pit was purchased for the outdoor area.

More sensory activities have been added to all classrooms, and more open-ended play materials have also been added to the outdoor play area.

The management will continue to ensure sufficient materials for sensory and messy play are available in the indoor and outdoor environments.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA document.

Summary Comment

The actions as outlined by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials point 1, 2, 3, and 4.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The nappy changing table available to the children in the Wobblers playroom appeared to be too small and unsteady when examined. The children's legs were hanging over the far end of the changing table when they were placed on it for nappy changing. This posed a risk to the safety of the children.

2. There were no steps to facilitate the children to climb onto and off the nappy changing unit. The staff was observed to be lifting each child on and off the nappy changing table and this posed a potential risk to the health and safety of the staff member and children. There were 4 preschool children present in the Wobbler playroom all aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Infection Control:

3. In the Wobblers playroom the children's hands were not washed after each child had their nappies changed. This increases the risk of cross infection and was at variance with the information documented on the nappy changing policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated in the CAPA that:

General Safety:

1. The management have contacted a plumber, who will advise on changes required in the bathroom and changing area to minimise any risk to the safety of the children and staff.
2. A step stool is available to facilitate children to climb onto and off the nappy changing unit. Staff members have been reminded to make use of the step stool and not to lift the children. The management will send another nappy changing unit with steps to replace the existing nappy changing unit.

Infection Control:

3. A refresher training on nappy changing procedure and hand washing protocol for the service was provided. The Manager has reminded the staff members of the importance of adhering to the service's nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of cross infection. The manager will continue to observe and supervise the staff members to ensure that the service's nappy changing policy is being followed to reduce the risk of cross infection. An ongoing refresher training will be provided by the management.

Summary Comment

General Safety:

Points 1 and 2 remain outstanding until the regulatory requirements of Regulation 23 General Safety are met by the registered provider. It is acknowledged that the step stool provided is only an interim measurement. However, the staff will still be required to lift the children from the step onto the nappy changing unit.

Infection Control:

Point 3. The actions as outlined by the registered provider to address the non-compliance meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23 Infection Control point 3.

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) Each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by staff. This record was available on the attendance register.

(3)(a) The registered provider ensured that no person other than the following were allowed enter the service.

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.

(b) A record in writing was kept of persons who entered the service on the visitor's log sheet.

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) There were 3 staff members trained in first aid response immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available and easily accessible throughout the premises.
- (b)The first aid boxes will be available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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)
- 1.The sheltered outdoor area appeared unclean and poorly maintained. The fencing was broken and in need of painting. The ground surface was unclean and in need of a deep cleaning.
 - 2.The floor covering in the office area was torn and needed to be replaced. Throughout the service there were areas where the floor covering appeared old ,worn, and lifting . This was noted in the Toddlers playroom in the creche and the preschool playrooms and the bathroom facilities in the two-storey building.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

The registered provider has stated in the CAPA that :

- 1.The sheltered outdoor area has been deep cleaned with adequate maintenance in place. The broken fence has been repaired and repainted.

2.The floor covering the office area, the Toddlers’ playroom, and the preschool playroom have been retouched and adequately maintained.

The management will ensure that a continuous deep cleaning of the service is ongoing, and the manager will ensure that any repairs that requires attention is reported for immediate action.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Photographs submitted with the CAPA document.

Summary Comment

The actions as outlined by the registered provider to address the non-compliances meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 29 Premises (d) points 1 and 2.