

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2022FL007				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Once Upon a Time				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Hollywood Rath Avenue, Hollywood Rath, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin				
<b>Eircode:</b>	D15C6XT				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Anne Marie, David McCormack				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	13/06/2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>41</td> <td>PM</td> <td>28</td> </tr> </table>	AM	41	PM	28
AM	41	PM	28		

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	<p>Early Years Inspectorate 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K</p>
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Nelson and C. Whelan
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager.

### 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

Once Upon a Time is a registered as a full day care service but also provides part-time and sessional service operating from a purpose-built premises in a residential area in Dublin 15. The service is registered to accommodate 150 children aged 0-6 years and is one of nine services owned by the registered provider. There are twelve care rooms within the service located across the ground floor and first floor. On the ground floor, there is the Baby Room 1 (0-1 year), Baby Room 2: (0-1 year), Wobbler Room 1 (1-2 years), Wobbler Room 2 (1-2 years), Junior Toddler Room (2-3 years), Senior Toddler Room (2-3 years) and Pre Montessori-Room (2-3 years). On the first floor, there is the Pre Montessori-Room 1 (3-4 years), Pre Montessori-Room 2 (3-4 years), Montessori Room (ECCE): (2 years 8 months - 6 years), Montessori Room 2 (3-6 years) and Montessori Room 3 (3-6 years). On the day of inspection, there were five care rooms in operation with children present: Baby room 1, Wobbler Rooms 1 and 2, a Toddler Room on the ground floor and Montessori Room (ECCE) on the first floor. A lift is available to the first floor, and the kitchen is also located on the first floor. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There are currently 11 staff employed in the service and there were 10 staff present on the day of the inspection, including the person in charge, a cook, an administrative staff member and seven staff working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation

- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(3)(4)(7); 11(1)(2)(8) 16(1)(h)(i), 19(1)(a) and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(3)(4),
- Regulation 16(1)(h)(j) – Record in relation to Preschool children,
- Regulation 19 (1)(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of child,
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Room and Wobbler 1 and Wobbler 2 and did not include the Toddler Room and the Montessori (ECCE) Room.

Regulation 11 was inspected across all rooms. Regulation 9(7) was reviewed on all staff files.

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 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.*

*(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;*
- (c) these Regulations.*

### Compliance Information

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

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The following was reviewed on inspection:

- The full files of six staff were reviewed, these included the full files of five staff who were new to the service since the last inspection held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the full file of an administration staff member.
- The qualification of a staff member where there was an outstanding non-compliance following the previous inspection held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- Evidence of induction and ongoing support and supervision for all 11 staff members.

The registered provider had completed the following checks for the six staff members:

(2)

(a) Eleven validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) One validated written reference was available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six staff members.

(d) The five staff who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

(3) There was documentary evidence in place that the checks were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

The qualifications of seven staff members were reviewed:

(4) Evidence was available for six of the seven files reviewed that staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

(7)(a)(c) The registered provider had evidence available for the 11 staff members employed that they had received information in relation to the policies, procedures of the service and ongoing support and training for Regulation 19 in relation to relationships, transitions and sensory and outdoor play.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) There was no evidence available that a staff member who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs. It is acknowledged that this was an outstanding non-compliance from the previous inspection on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023, and there was evidence available that ongoing attempts have been made to address this.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The service will ensure to have all required documents prior to start dates including certificates.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the relevant qualification.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance found on inspection for Regulation 9(4) has been addressed.

## 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

(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

(2) The required adult/child ratio was observed to be maintained in the following rooms:

The adult child ratios during the morning were maintained as follows;

- Wobbler Room 1- 2 adults to 9 children aged between 1-2 years.
- Wobbler Room 2 -1 adult to 5 children aged between 1-2 years.
- Toddler Room - 1 adult to 7 children aged between 2.5 to 3.5 years.
- Montessori Room - 2 adults to 16 children aged between 3 -5 years.

The adult child ratios during afternoon were maintained as follows.

- Baby Room: 2 adults to 4 children aged between 8 to 10 months.
- Wobbler Room 1: 2 adults to 8 children aged between 1-2 years.
- Wobbler Room 2:1 adult to 5 children aged between 1-2 years.
- Toddler Room: 1 adult to 5 children aged between 2.5 to 3.5 years.
- Montessori Room: 2 adults to 6 children aged between 3 -5 years.

(8)(a) There was a minimum of two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The review of the staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises during the services operational hours.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure there was an adequate number of adults available in the Baby Room at all times. During the period from 11.25am to 12.01pm, the staff member available in this room was unable to meet the basis care needs of the children. This is detailed under the non-compliance section of Regulation 19.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio was not always maintained in the Baby Room, as outlined in the chart below.

All children were attending on a full-day-care basis.

Non-Compliant Adult to Child ratio on day of inspection

Room Name	Time	Number & Age of children (years)	Number Of Adults required	Number of adults available	Minimum adult to child ratio requirement
Baby Room	11.25am – 12.01pm	4 aged 0-1	2	1	1:3 (0-1 years)

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service will ensure to there is sufficient staff to allow for breaks and remain in ratios at all times.
2. The service will ensure there is sufficient staff to allow for breaks and remain in ratios at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

- 1 & 2. Evidence of new staff.  
Copy of service roster.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances found on inspection for Regulation 11(1)(2) have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

### Compliance Information

(1)(h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) The staff roster was not reflective of the adults who were working in the service as evidenced by the following:

- The administrative staff member was not detailed on the roster despite working directly with the children and provided cover across the rooms during lunch breaks. It is acknowledged that this staff member held a relevant qualification of at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

All adults working in the service must be detailed on a daily staff roster; including start, finish and break times and any relief cover must be included.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: Administrative staff no longer work from the service premises.

Preventive action: The service will ensure all staff registered to work from the premises will be included on the roster.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16(1)(i) has been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

##### Basic Needs:

- Children were observed to be grouped with their peers for their meals which facilitated mealtimes as a sociable experience. Meals were on a regular basis and adequate portion sizes were given. The children had a snack of crackers and cream cheese with tomatoes at 11.00am, a hot meal of pasta with a vegetarian tomato sauce was served at 2.00pm, and an afternoon snack of fruit was served at 4.00pm. Alternatives were offered to suit dietary requirements, for example the children in the Baby Room were offered pureed vegetable as an alternative to crackers and cheese for their morning snack. Staff discussed how they have recently changed the timing of the main meal from 11.00am to 2.00pm as they felt this suited the needs of the children better.
- Nappy changing was scheduled on a regular basis and staff discussed how they complete more regular changes if needed, for example one child who had a nappy rash was changed every two hours.

- Behaviour was observed to be supported through positive strategies such as a firm clear description of boundaries, praise and encouragement, and intervening in a timely manner. For example, in Wobbler Room 1 when a child would not sit at the table for dinner; ‘no, no, you need to sit at the table’ and was then praised in their efforts for returning to their seat.
- All children were observed to access outdoor play on at least one occasion. Drinks of water were freely available, and appropriate clothing and sunscreen was used to protect the children from the sun.

### Supporting Relationships:

- The staff in the rooms were observed to engage with the children in reassuring warm tones. Staff in Wobbler Room 1 created a positive atmosphere, singing songs and using the children names.
- Relationships with parents were facilitated though the exchange of relevant information on children such as sleep, diet and nappy changes via an online software application.
- Children were introduced to new rooms on a phased basis, in order to facilitate their comfort with the transition. Staff discussed how two children from the Toddler Room spend time in the Montessori Room in the afternoons.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and appropriate for children attending. Toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children in the rooms.
- Equipment such as play kitchens with props, jigsaws, stacking, sorting and connecting toys, transporting toys and small world play were freely accessible in the rooms to facilitate creative, language, and physical play experiences.
- Images of the children and their families and products of children’s artwork were displayed throughout the rooms created a sense of welcome and belonging.
- There was a rest area available in all of the rooms, where children could take a break from activities.

### Programme of Learning:

- Staff in the toddler room discussed how they adapt plans and activities according to the needs of the children.
- Strategies to support language development such as singing and continuous running commentary were observed in the rooms. In the Baby Room the staff member was observed repeating the children’s vocalisation which reaffirms and supports early language development in infants.

- Staff reported how they have recently undergone training to support sensory and outdoor play, and that they share this learning across the other services operated by the registered provider. They have recently joined an organisation that will give them access to a range of open-ended materials to facilitate sensory play in the rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs:

1. In the Baby Room there was not a sufficient number of staff available to meet the basic care needs of children in an appropriate and timely manner, as evidenced by the following example:
  - At 11.20am a child was observed seated in a highchair after having had their morning snack. The child was observed to signal both verbally and non-verbally to be lifted out and became upset. The staff member was tending to the three other children in the room. The child was lifted out at 11.43am. The use of highchairs should be limited only to the times children are eating.
2. A child of less than one year old was observed to self-feed a bottle of milk whilst in a bouncer chair. This was not in line with best practice.
3. Sleep time in Wobbler Room 2 was determined by service rather than the childrens needs as evidenced by the following:
 

One child who did not display signs of tiredness and did not settle to sleep in cot was kept in darkened quiet environment for more than an hour (from 11.50am to 12.55pm) without opportunity for play or movement. A staff member informed the inspector that the child eventually went to sleep at 2.00pm.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Corrective action: additional staff have been hired to support the baby room was submitted and that the service also use the highchairs for taking part in art and craft activities.  
Preventive action: The service will ensure there is sufficient staff.
2. Corrective action: The children will no longer have bottles while in bouncer chairs.  
Preventive actions: Staff have been directed that babies should no longer have bottles in bouncer chairs.
3. Corrective action: The children will be placed to sleep when tired and any child who does not sleep is to be lifted after 20 minutes. Staff have been given training on safe sleep.  
Preventive action: The service ensure that all staff follow their safe sleep policy.

## Supporting documentation submitted

1. Evidence of additional staff and staff roster.
2. No evidence submitted.
3. Staff sign off on training.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified for Regulation 19(1)(a) have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## 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:

- Entry and exit was managed and monitored by staff, with an electronic door release system in operation which was up high out of reach of children. This restricted the entry of unauthorised persons and the unsupervised exit of children.
- There was a completed up to date daily risk checklist available in the rooms.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- A person who had visited the service to do maintenance on the day of the inspection had signed in appropriately.
- The tomatoes for the morning snack were cut into appropriate bite size portions for the children.

### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash before and after mealtimes.
- The nappy changing practice observed was in line with appropriate infection control practices. For example, the staff member used gloves and an apron effectively, and cleaned the area and handwashed after use.
- Foot pedal operated bins were observed to be in use throughout the rooms.

- The premises were in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.

### Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every 10 minutes.
- Cots were provided for children under two years, and cellular blankets were used for all sleeping children.
- Air conditioning units maintained the temperatures of the rooms while children were sleeping between 16°C to 20°C.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- In Wobbler Room 1 the window restrictor was observed to not be engaged, and the positioning of a shelf unit underneath posed a risk that children could climb and access the open window. The inspector advised the staff member of the risk and it was rectified immediately.

#### Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

- Nappy creams and lotions stored on the shelving in the nappy changing facilities in both the Baby and Wobbler Rooms were not consistently individually labelled with clear details of the children's names. There was a risk that the creams could be mixed up and used on the wrong child, increasing the risk of cross contamination.
- A child in Wobbler Room 2 had a soother attached to a trailing chain while sat at the table for snack time. The soother was observed to trail on the floor, and across the table with the movement of the child, increasing the risk of cross contamination.

#### Safe Sleep:

- Sheets on two of the cots in the Baby Cot Room and one of the cots in the Wobbler Cot Room were observed to be too large for the mattress, and therefore loose fitting. There was a risk the child could get entangled in the sheet. Properly fitting sheets must be provided for cots.

#### Fire Safety:

- The details of the attendance of the children in the Wobbler Room 2 was not accurately recorded in the attendance log. A child was recorded as present in Wobbler Room 2 while they were actually present in the Toddler Room. This was updated at 12.05pm when brought to the attention of the staff member.

Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. Corrective action: this was addressed on the day of the inspection and staff have been retrained on safety issues.  
Preventive action: the service will ensure all staff are aware of the safety risks in relation to windows and doors.

##### Infection Control:

2. Corrective action: all children's creams have been labelled.  
Preventive action: no action submitted.
3. Corrective action: The service has requested parents not to send in soothers on chains and staff have been advised these are no longer acceptable.  
Preventive action: the service will ensure all items are labeled immediately when brought in by parents and the chains will be removed by staff members.

##### Safe Sleep:

4. Corrective action: new sheets have been ordered and placed on the cots.  
Preventive action: the service will ensure all sheets are the correct size when dressing the cots.

##### Fire Safety:

5. Corrective action: The staff have received training on the use of the tablet and the registration of children in the correct rooms.  
Preventive action: the service will continue to monitor the children registration on the tablet.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

- 1 Addressed on the day of inspection, as above.
- 2 Photographic evidence submitted.

##### Infection Control:

- 3 No evidence submitted.

##### Safe Sleep:

- 4 Photographic evidence and evidence of purchase of new sheets.

**Fire Safety:**

5. No legible evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted and the non-compliances found under Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.