

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022FL009		
Name of Service:	Balcunnin Learn'Play Preschool		
Address of Service:	Balcunnin, Skerries, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K34 ND35		
Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara Thornton		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	15/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle		
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		

Description of service

Balcunnin Learn'Play is a sessional early years' service which is conducted from 2 interconnecting rooms in the registered providers family home on the outskirts of Skerries in north Dublin. The service operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm Monday to Friday participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children on a daily basis.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, and 19. 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 registered provider 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was an emergency contact person available if required.
- (b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection and remained for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the registered provider whose file was 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

- (2)(a) &(b) Two written references were not available for either the registered provider or the emergency contact person in the service.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were not available for the emergency contact person. The emergency contact person has not been required to be present in the service to date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- (2)(a) &(b) References for both the registered provider and emergency contact are available and on file.
- (c) Garda vetting for the emergency contact person is currently in progress it was delayed due to Christmas break.

Preventive Action

- (2)(a) &(b) Ensure that all relevant documents are correct and in the appropriate form.
- (c) Ensure Garda vetting is always in date.

Supporting documentation submitted

References for both the registered provider and the emergency contact person.

Summary Comment

As Garda vetting has not yet been received for the emergency contact person in the service the regulatory requirement for regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has not been addressed and remains outstanding. The registered provider has stated that the emergency contact person has not been required in the service to date.

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)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The correct adult to child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There was 1 adult caring for 8 children aged 3 years to 4 years.
- (8)(c) A second person familiar with the operation of the service is available if required.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- On arrival, the children attending the preschool were engaged in play-based activities in the service. The registered provider present joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the registered provider was responsive to children's ideas and requests.
- The children brought their own morning snack with them to the service. There was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at snack time, with children chatting among themselves and the registered provider contributing to the conversations.
- All of the children in attendance were toilet trained and they were encouraged to use the bathroom independently with support provided as required. Children's independence was supported in relation to putting on their coats before going outdoors and placing their lunch boxes in their bags when snack time was complete.
- The registered provider was observed to approach any minor disagreements that occurred between the children in a positive and calm way and supported the children to resolve any conflict that arose.

Supporting relationships:

- The registered provider was observed interacting with the children in a warm and caring manner. The registered provider chatted with the children using warm vocal tones, a welcoming facial expression and a listening and reflective approach. The children sought out the registered provider for comfort and support as they required it.
- The children's artwork and photographs were on display in the care room, which support children's wellbeing by feeling valued and appreciated.
- The registered provider was observed taking the opportunity to interact with parents at collection time and update them on their children's day in the service.

Physical and material environment:

- In the care room the play materials and equipment were displayed and accessible on low level shelving to promote the children's choice and independence when selecting their play opportunities.
- The 2 interconnecting rooms were well laid out with play resources and materials. Interest areas included a well-resourced kitchen area with a range of accessorial materials to enable the children to extend their play. A wide range of Montessori materials were provided in addition to transport toys, tabletop resources arts and crafts materials and construction blocks. The children were observed to be well engaged and supported throughout the morning.
- A broad range of books were available in the service which supported the children's language development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the service. The area is covered with grass and an area which is covered with a safety surface. Two enclosed areas housed hens and ducks which the children enjoyed observing. A climbing frame with a slide and swings was available which had a sand tray beneath it along with a see saw, a basketball hoop and a playhouse. All of the children enjoyed time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.