

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023FL003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Charlies Childcare (Donabate)		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	17/19 Rahillion Walk, Donabate, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K36P267		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ronnie Carroll		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full day care, part time, sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	41	PM 34
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully & S. Taaffe		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

Charlie's Childcare (Donabate) is one of 11 childcare services owned by the registered provider in the North Co. Dublin area. This service is conducted from a recently constructed purpose-built 2-storey premises located on a corner site in a newly developed housing estate. There are 6 care rooms provided in the premises. The Baby/Wobbler Room, the Wobbler 2 room and the Toddler Room are located on the ground floor. The Senior Toddler Room, Preschool 1 room and Preschool 2 room (the pink room) are located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The Preschool 2 room was not in use on the day of inspection. A sleep room is located on the ground floor as well as a nappy changing room, a wheelchair accessible toilet, the kitchen, a separate laundry room and an office. On the first floor there is a dedicated staff room with staff toilets. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

On the day of inspection there were 18 members of staff employed and working in this service, 16 of whom were working directly with the children, a service manager who provides support in the rooms when needed and a regional manager who is currently based in this service. One member of staff present is a staff member of the sister service located in Swords and was working in the service as staff were on annual leave. The registered provider was present for part of the inspection. The service's chief operating officer was present throughout the inspection.

### 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 and health, welfare and development of child. However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed risk was identified under Regulation 23, Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 20, Facilities for rest and play. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

## Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 22/11/2023 in respect of Regulation 23, as the temperature of the water in the sinks of each care room exceeded the recommended water temperature of 43°C. More detail is included in the report under Regulation 23. A response was received on 23/11/23 from a member of the management team with written assurances of measures taken to address and prevent exceeding water temperatures which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

## 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.

(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 when required.

(b) The service manager was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, a total of 18 employee files were reviewed including the service manager, the regional manager who was present on the day and 16 staff who worked directly with the children. In addition, the registered provider and company director files were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

- Two written, validated references were available for the registered provider, company director and 16 staff members employed in the service.
- 1 written and validated reference was on file for 2 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, company director and for the 18 staff members employed in the service.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 9 staff members who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Fourteen staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The service manager and the regional manager also held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) A second written and validated reference was not on file for 2 staff members who work directly with the children.

(d) International police vetting was not on file for 2 staff members who work directly with children whose curriculum vitae indicated that they had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) On the day of inspection, there was no documentary evidence on file to confirm that 2 staff members who work directly with the children had obtained an appropriate childcare qualification or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider has obtained and validated a second reference in relation to the 2 staff members above.

(d) International police vetting has been obtained for 1 staff member. An application has been made for international police vetting to the relevant embassy in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> staff member.

(4) Documentary evidence was submitted to demonstrate that the 2 staff members above held an appropriate childcare qualification, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

#### **Preventative actions**

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider and management team will ensure that 2 references are obtained and validated prior to staff members working in the service.

(d) The registered provider has stated that they will ensure required police clearance is obtained prior to start date, and also double check CV's and note staff who have resided outside of Ireland for more than 6 months.

(4) The registered provider has stated they will ensure that certificates of qualifications will be obtained and on file for all staff members

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of international police vetting disclosure

Documentary evidence of international police vetting application

Documentary evidence of awarded qualifications

### Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted information of the corrective and preventative actions taken to address the above non-compliance, along with documentary evidence.

The non-compliances found under Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) and 9(4) have been adequately addressed.

In relation to the non-compliances under Regulation 9(2)(d), the registered provider submitted police vetting for one staff member which was accepted.

However, police vetting for one staff member was not submitted and therefore the non-compliance remains outstanding. It is acknowledged that an application has been made to obtain the outstanding police vetting and this is to be submitted to the Inspectorate when received.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 09:45am the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Baby/Wobbler room there were 5 children aged 12 months to 16 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Wobbler 2 room there 10 children aged 16 months to 1 year and 10 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room there were 6 children aged 1 year 10 months to 2 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Senior Toddler room there were 7 children aged 2 years 3 months to 2 years 8 months being cared for by 3 staff members.

- In the Preschool 1 room there were 13 children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years 8 months being cared for by 3 staff members.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service.

### 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 are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

#### Basic needs:

- All snacks and meals are provided by the service, with hot lunches supplied by an external food supplier and reheated in the service before being served. A weekly menu is on display in each care room. The menu for the Baby/Wobbler room is catered specifically to the age and requirements of the age group. For morning snack, children were observed having fresh banana and crackers. For lunch, the younger children were served beef casserole and older children ate beef stew and mashed potato. The menu stated that breakfast consisted of a selection of cereals and toast, and afternoon tea on the day would be soup and soda bread. In the care rooms, the fridges had supplies of fresh fruit and yogurts in the event of a child feeling hungry in between meals. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and sociable. In the Baby/Wobbler room, children sat at small tables and chairs and were supported to feed themselves. Children who required a highchair were provided with one, and a staff member sat with the children to feed them. In the Wobbler 2 room and the Toddler room, children were encouraged to feed themselves, with staff providing gentle support when needed.
- The staff in the Baby/Wobbler room facilitated child-led sleeping practices, following children's individual sleep schedules, and responding promptly to children's signs of tiredness. The staff were familiar with how each child preferred to fall asleep, and incorporated practices from home such as cradling children before placing them in their cot.

With the exception of 1 child, the children in Wobbler 2, Toddler and Senior Toddler room went for a nap after lunch on beds placed in the care rooms. Three children from the Preschool 1 room who still availed of a daytime nap were also facilitated to sleep on beds in the Senior Toddler room after lunch. Each care room also had rest areas available throughout the day, consisting of a selection of items such as foam mats, floor mats, child sized sofas and armchairs, cushions and soft toys.

- Nappy changing for younger children was carried out regularly, with staff observed to talk and sing to children throughout the changing procedures. Toilet trained children could access toilets independently and were provided with discreet supervision or additional support as required. The staff were attentive to children's care needs and were observed cleaning children's faces and noses, placing bibs on them before meals, helping them dress or undress for nap time or outdoor play.
- With the exception of the Baby/Wobbler room, all children had time outdoors during the inspection.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff in the care rooms spoke about the children positively and with familiarity. The children were observed to move freely in their space, exploring and playing with materials and seeking support and comfort from the staff. This suggests that the children feel a sense of safety and security within these relationships and in the service.
- The staff in the service were observed speaking to children in gentle tones, getting down to the child's level to interact and providing nurturing care and interactions. For example, the staff in the Baby/Wobbler room frequently sat with children on the floor to embrace and comfort them. A staff member in the Wobbler 2 room was observed gently twirling a child's hair to soothe him as he showed signs of tiredness. Two children in the Toddler room had commenced attending the service in the days preceding the inspection, one of whom needed additional support and comforting at times during the day which was promptly and kindly offered by the staff members, with cuddles, reassuring words and singing provided with soothing effect. The staff were also sensitive and supportive to children in guiding positive behaviours.
- The service uses a mobile app to communicate children's daily routines and activities to parents. Important information about children is recorded by parents in children's enrolment forms which staff have access to. This information is used to support children's needs, for example, the staff in the Baby/Wobbler room demonstrated that they had spoken with parents about the children's home routines and preferences and incorporated the information into their practice.

### Physical and material environment:

- Each care room had appropriate furniture to facilitate child led play and care. Tables and chairs were age appropriate in each room. Toys and materials were stored on low shelving and were easily accessible to the children.
- The care rooms were organised with interest areas such as reading areas, home corners, construction/small world and tabletop activity areas. There was a variety of materials and equipment available to suit the relevant age groups. During discussion with staff and management team, it was evident that there are plans to further develop the environments now that children have settled in to the service and they are learning more about their interests and needs.
- The outdoor space was equipped with a variety of play equipment such as bikes, scooters, ride along cars, large building blocks, goalposts and balls. Waterproof mats were also available for children who wanted to sit and play with materials on the artificial grass.

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

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

1. Four children in the Wobbler 2 room and 6 children in the Toddler room under the age of 24 months were sleeping on stackable beds. The use of stackable beds with this age group is at variance to Tusla guidance on safe sleep provisions for children under 24 months.
2. Six children under the age of 24 months in the Wobbler 2 room and 5 children under 24 months in the Toddler room were sleeping on floor beds in the care rooms without a completed sleep plan that is required under Tusla guidance on safe sleep provisions for children under 24 months when children move from sleeping in a cot to a floor bed.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Additional beds appropriate for use by children under 24 months were ordered and are now in use in the service.
2. Sleep plans have now been obtained for children who require it. Four children from the 5 in the Toddler room have since turned 2 years old and no longer require this.

### **Preventative Actions:**

1. The registered provider will ensure that children are sleeping on the correct beds as per requirements according to age.
2. The registered provider will ensure that sleep plans and risk assessments are obtained prior to a child's use of a floor bed.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of purchase of additional floor beds appropriate for use by children under 24 months

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions outlined by the registered provider have been reviewed and accepted. Implementation of the preventative actions will be reviewed and assessed at the next inspection. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 20 (1)(b) has been adequately addressed.

## 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

### **Infection Control:**

1. The water temperature of the sinks located in the 4 care rooms were above the recommended maximum temperature of 43°C, and read as follows:
  - The Wobbler 2 room, 53.1°C. at 11.10am

- The Senior Toddler room, 53.4°C at 11.15am
- The Toddler room, 53.6°C at 11.50am
- The Baby room, 53.2°C at 3.50pm
- Preschool room, 54.8°C at 3.45pm

These water temperatures presented a risk of scalding by staff or children. While it is noted that the sinks are fitted for use by adults, on the inspector's arrival to the Wobbler 2 room at 3.45pm, a child was being supported to stand on an adult chair at the care room sink to have their face and hands washed. An Immediate Action Notice was issued on-site to the registered provider.

2. Some staff members who worked with the youngest children were vague in their knowledge of the procedures in relation to the sterilisation of soothers. One staff member explained that soothers are washed in 'really hot water', another stated they are sterilised in the dishwasher and another member of staff explained they used sterilising fluid but was unsure of the appropriate dilution and use of the sterilising fluid to affectively clean and sterilise soothers. Soothers needs to be cleaned and sterilised effectively to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### **Infection Control:**

1. The water temperature in the adult sinks have now been adjusted to below the maximum temperature of 43 degrees.
2. Staff have been provided with an updated policy on infection control and sterilisation of soothers along with a log for recording.

##### **Preventative Actions**

1. All children's sinks are calibrated to below 43 degrees as per the regulations. We will ensure that all adult sinks are also calibrated to below 43 degrees.
2. Ensure all staff members are aware of policies around sterilisation.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of water temperature readings at each sink, each reading below 43°C

Sample of log to be used for recording of sterilisation of soothers.

Copy of new sterilisation of soothers policy and procedure.

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## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions provided by the registered provider have been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.