

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2023MH002 |
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| Name of Service: | Chestnut Daycare Limited |
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| Address of Service: | Cois Glaisin, Johnstown, Navan Co Meath. |
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| Eircode: | C15 KRK7 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Laura Higgins |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date of Inspection: | 15/05/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 45 | PM | 40 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan, Co. Meath |
| Inspection undertaken by: | D. Murray, AM. Cunningham. |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

Chestnut Daycare is privately owned and is 1 of 6 services operated by the registered providers. The service provides full day care, part time and sessional care to children from 0 to 6 years and operates from 07:30am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Children who are eligible can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is a purpose-built single storey building consisting of a reception area, office, 5 care rooms, cot room, kitchen and sanitary facilities. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employed a manager, deputy manager, 9 childcare staff and a cook. All staff were present on the day of the inspection with the exception of the cook. A student who was completing a childcare qualification was also present.

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.

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, manager, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure that identified specific roles of each employee was displayed in the reception area.

(2) (a)&(b) Thirteen staff files along with the students file were reviewed.

Twenty-eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 staff and the student. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 8 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the morning of the inspection there was, a manager, deputy manager and 9 childcare staff working directly with the 45 children attending the service. The registered provider arrived after the inspection had commenced. One staff member provided cover for nappy changing and breaks. The manager was also available to the care rooms if needed. The assistant manager provided relief in the kitchen and provided cover for breaks. The registered provider was also available to assist with putting the children to sleep in the cot room.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

The **Wobbler 1 room** had 1 staff member with 4 children ranging in age from 1 year to 1 year 2 months all attending on a full day care basis.

The **Wobbler 2 room** had 1 staff member with 4 children ranging in age from 1 year 2 months to 1 years 6 months all attending on a full day care basis.

The **Toddler 1 room** had 2 staff members with 9 children ranging in age from 1 year 6 months to 2 years all attending on a full day care basis. A student was also present.

The **Toddler 2 room** had 2 staff members with 12 children ranging in age from 2 to 2 years 8 months attending on a full day care basis.

The **Montessori room** had 2 staff members with 16 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to school going age.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- The staff members sat with the children at snack time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. There was a variety of themes in the different care rooms such as "Fruit", "Nature," "Under the Sea" and "Music" with the children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes along with musical instruments. Evidence of children's planting of avocados and sunflowers were displayed in the Montessori room.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members. Each room had a timetable for the use of the outdoor space.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences. The staff members frequently initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal cues and provided regular praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- The staff members communicated with parents through an electronic device and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Overall, the children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The cot room had 10 standard cots for children under 2 years requiring sleep. The Wobbler 1 and Toddler 2 rooms had stackable beds placed on the floor for the children over 2 years requiring sleep. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest, if needed.

(3)(a) An outdoor space was located to the rear of the building, which was enclosed with the building and walls, had a low impact all weather surface with 2 secure side gates.

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.

Compliance Information

- Materials and equipment were available on low level shelving in the care rooms. Children were observed to access the materials independently. The Montessori care room was well resourced with areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, Montessori equipment, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Equipment in the outdoor space included an activity tray, plastic balancing planks, scooters, small slide, children’s tables and chairs, footballs and plastic boxes with building blocks and additional play equipment.

Non-Compliance Information

- In the Wobbler 1 & 2 rooms and the Toddler 1 & 2 rooms the following was observed:
 - Areas of interest were poorly developed with little supporting equipment and materials to enhance the themed areas. Kitchen equipment was available with no kitchens. Animal baskets were available with no animal sheds or related toys. Dolls basket had no prams or buggies.
 - Equipment and materials were placed on linear shelving and in baskets with no visual labelling.
 - Art and craft materials and sensory trays were stored in the main storeroom in the service and not readily available in the care rooms for easy access.

The physical indoor environment should be stimulating, challenging, diverse, creative and provide an enriching experience for all children to ensure meaningful sustained play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. New materials have been bought for the care rooms which will be visually accessible to the children. The art and crafts supplies will be re-stocked in the care rooms on a weekly basis.

The registered provider and manager will monitor the play materials /equipment to ensure they are accessible to the children on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the following:

- Supportive equipment for areas of interest.
- Visual labelling beside each basket in care rooms.
- Art and craft supply readily available in each care room.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliances for regulation 21 Equipment and materials. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a 3-week menu plan for the children attending the full day care service with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry cooked on site. All children attending the sessional service brought their own lunch. On the day of inspection, the children had a choice of cereals for breakfast. Morning snack was served at 09:30am which consisted of rice cakes, cream cheese and fruit. The main meal of the day was served between 11:30 and 12:30pm which consisted of chicken a la king with rice. Evening tea was served at 14:45pm which consisted of blueberry and lemon loaf with yogurt. Additional snacks were available for the children staying until 6pm if required. Water and milk were the drinks of choice with individual cups for the children in the care rooms.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor space was enclosed and had 2 secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor space.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- All pacifiers were stored in individual boxes in the cot room.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰C and between 18 to 22⁰C in the Wobbler 1 and Toddler 2 care room while children were sleeping. Fans were available to reduce the air temperature.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 firefighting 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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 10/05/2024.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 04/12/2023. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in July 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the reception area and in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 70 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.