

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DS002
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Name of Service:	Ardilea Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Unit 103, Block C, Ardilea Crescent, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D14 H7N3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciaran Fitzpatrick
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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

Ardilea Childcare Limited is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care for children from 1 to 6 years of age. Sessional care is provided from 09:00 to 12:00. The service operates from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose-built facility on the ground floor of an apartment block within a residential development in south Dublin. There are two care rooms in the service. The Toddler room caters for children aged 1 year. The Preschool room caters for children from 2 to 4 years of age. There is a fully enclosed outdoor space on the premises which can also be accessed directly from the Toddler room.

Staffing

The service currently employs six staff including a manager and deputy manager. There were six staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present during 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 an announced initial inspection and focused on the area of governance and 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 the following regulations:

9(1)(a)(b),(2)(a)-(d),(3),(4) Management and Recruitment,

11(1),(2),(8)(a) Staffing Levels,

19(1)(a)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

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.

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

(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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)(b)
- The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The files of six adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the 12 written, validated references that were required, 7 were available from a past employer and 4 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the six adults. 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 required for six adults and was available for the six adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. One staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b)

One of the references obtained in respect of one staff member from a source other than a past employer was not suitable, as the source of the reference could not be considered to be independent or unbiased.

(3)

The registered provider did not ensure that a police vetting disclosure was obtained for one adult prior to them commencing work in the service. The staff member commenced working in the service on 25 September 2024 and the police vetting available for the staff member was dated 25 November 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(b)

The reference of one staff member needed to be from a source that was suitable and it has been rectified. The Manager will be more vigilant in the recruitment process and take advice from the HR company and the County Childcare Committee.

(3)

The staff member did have a police vetting deemed unsuitable; thus, the new police vetting has been made available. The Manager will be more vigilant in the recruitment process and take advice from the HR company and the County Childcare Committee.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 17 children attending the service being supervised by 6 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and a weekly meal plan was available which detailed a range of nutritious meals and snacks served to children at regular intervals throughout the day. The main meal was provided by an external catering company. Dinner was served at 11:40. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meals and were also offered milk with their dinner.

Additional servings of dinner were available and were provided to children. Staff were observed asking children who had finished their meal if they wanted more. All children who requested more food were provided with an additional serving. Inspectors observed children who did not eat the main meal being provided with an alternative. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their dinner.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. Inspectors observed children cleaning up after their play and older children were observed using the toilet independently. Younger children's nappies were changed regularly. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

There was a designated nap time for younger children who required a nap.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day using an online application to communicate with parents detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities. Staff stated that they also speak to parents at arrival and collection times.

The care rooms were bright and were arranged into areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore including arts and crafts materials, small world toys, construction toys, rest areas with books and sensory play materials. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos and birthday displays were displayed in the care rooms.

The environments were laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the side of the premises and had artificial grass surfacing. The area was resourced with a range of developmentally appropriate play equipment. All children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

Children were observed to be engaged in their play with adults supporting them as needed.