

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2024FL005

Name of Service: Fonthill Lodge Childcare

Address of Service: 1 Chapel Wood Drive, Hollystown, Dublin 15.

Eircode: D15 HP21

Name of Registered Provider: Conor Lynch, Maurice Lynch

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 04/12/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	15

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Dublin 15 D15CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly and T Nelson
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).

Conditions if applicable Not applicable.

Description of service

Fonthill Lodge Childcare is a privately owned service which operates from a purpose build detached premises located in a residential area in Dublin 15. This service is one of three services owned by the registered provider. This service is registered to operate a full-time, part-time, and sessional service to a maximum of 50 children aged 0 to 6 years old from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme and the ECCE session operates from 9.00am to 12.00 noon and is registered to provide school age childcare in the afternoon. There are six rooms, with the layout as follows:

Ground Floor: three care rooms catering for children aged from 0 to 3 years old: cot room, kitchen, reception area, nappy changing facilities and sanitary accommodation for staff and children.

First Floor: three care rooms catering for children aged from 3 to 6 years old; staff room, office, nappy changing and sanitary facilities. On the day of the inspection only three care rooms were open.

There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises, accessed via the care rooms.

Staffing

There are currently 11 staff employed by the service including the Quality, Compliance & HR Manager, the person in charge, a cook who can provide cover in the rooms when needed and seven childcare staff who work directly with the children. There is also a school aged childcare worker. The Quality, Compliance & HR Manager and the person in charge manage the oversight of the service and are available to provide cover where needed in the rooms.

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 the child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11 (1)(4) Staffing Levels.

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of the Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included three care rooms: bumblebee room, caterpillar room and the purple room.

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 Quality, Compliance & HR Manager, 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) 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.

(2) The files of ten staff were reviewed and the registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Fifteen validated written references were available from recent past employers.
- (b) Five validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members employed.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that five adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

(4) Ten staff 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.

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.

(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).

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were eight staff available to the 20 children in the morning and five staff available to the 15 children in the afternoon.

(4) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived to the service and throughout the inspection. Five staff were allocated to work directly with the 20 children on the morning of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Bumblebee room – 1 adult to 4 children aged between 2 to 3 years old.
- Caterpillar room - 2 adults to 6 children aged between 1 to 2 years old.
- Purple room - 2 adults to 10 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years old.

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) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasant and sociable experience for the children. Children brought lunches from home and hot meals were cooked in the kitchen using fresh ingredients. The menu outlined that meals and snacks were provided regularly throughout the day including; breakfast from 8.30am, hot meal or lunch at 11.30am, hot meal at 2.15pm and snack at 4.30pm. There were alternative food options available for children with additional dietary requirements or preferences. There was a water drinks station available in care rooms which was easily accessible to the children.
- There were individual cots available to the children with children's names and photographs beside each cot. There were low beds available to children over two years old. There was individual bed linen available to the children. Sleep checks were maintained. There were cosy areas available for the children to relax. Children were observed relaxing and reading books after lunch time.
- Staff were respectful to the children and during nappy changing times children were asked who would like to go first. Children were supported with toilet training by staff and reminded about going to the toilet.
- Children's independence was supported. Children were encouraged to wash hands independently and to put handtowels in the bin. Children were encouraged to tidy up after lunch time.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring relationships with the children. Staff comforted children who were upset using low tones and were familiar with children's needs and interests.
- Relationships with siblings were facilitated within the service. Siblings eat breakfast together in the morning, at mealtimes in the evening and often play together during outdoor play time.

- Staff communicate with parents through use of a digital software application to share information about children’s care needs such as toileting, food and sleep. Staff have conversations with the parents during arrival and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children in baskets on low level shelving which facilitated children’s independence and choice in play.
- The care rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. These interest areas included: Cosy Area, Home Corner, Dress up, Construction area, Sensory play area. In addition, there was paint, pencils and paper to support mark making and children’s creativity. Areas of interests were age appropriate and materials for children under two years old included an indoor wooden climbing structure, music equipment, push pull toys, jigsaws, blocks, small world, and toys for transporting.
- There was a birthday chart and children’s art displayed in the room. Children’s names and photographs were displayed on their coat hooks which supported children’s identity and belonging in the service.
- Children were observed playing in the outdoor play area. In the outdoor play area, there was a large wooden slide and low slide for younger children, wooden kitchen, seated area and rocking horses. This promoted gross motor development and fundamental movement skills. There was a synthetic grass surface in the outdoor areas.

Programme of Activities:

- There were short term curriculum plans displayed in the care rooms. These plans included a winter theme which was reflected in the children’s art displayed in the room.
- There was evidence to show that transitions were supported from home to the service, for example there is a two week integration period for children who are new and settling into the service. Children spend one hour on their first day in the service and parents are invited to attend on this day. This transition into the setting can be extended for longer if needed.
- Staff were engaged in children’s play for example ‘What time is it Mr. Wolf?’ during outdoor play.
- Staff were observed to use positive strategies to support children’s behaviour such as giving clear guidance around unacceptable behaviours and encouraging and praising positive behaviours.