

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024KE007		
Name of Service:	Darling Buds		
Address of Service:	11 The Heights Walkers Gate, Southgreen Road, Kildare, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	R51 PA29		
Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Walshe		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	25/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM 20
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher		
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	N/A		

Description of service

Darling Buds is one of four services operated by the registered provider located in Portlaoise and Kildare town. Full day care, part time and sessional care and education is provided to children aged 0-6 years. The service opens from 07:00am-19:00hrs, Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose-built two-storey premises in a private housing development on the outskirts of Kildare town. Four pre-school rooms are currently operational, one located on the first floor and the remainder on the ground floor. A cot room, smaller sleep room, kitchen, office and utility room are also provided.

Play areas are located to the rear and side of the building and car parking is available for set down and pick up at the front of the service.

Staffing

There were eight adults employed in the service, of these, seven adults, including the registered provider were present on the day of inspection. Six adults were working directly with the children, the person in charge was available to assist in the care rooms as required.

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.

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, 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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge was on the premises during the inspection.

The records of eight staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

Sixteen written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of eight records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all employed staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(d)
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Eight members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)
There were 29 children attending the service being supervised directly by six staff members during the inspection.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

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) Basic needs of children

There was a healthy eating policy in place and the parents provided the morning snack for their child. The hot meals, afternoon snack and evening tea was provided by the service. A two-week menu was in place and an outside catering company provided the main hot meals served daily which were reheated in the onsite kitchen. The hot meal served was roast turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy.

Drinking water was freely available in the pre-school rooms to the children throughout the day. Staff members sat with the children for snack and all children were given plenty of time to finish their meals and were not rushed.

During conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any foods that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces.

Bibs were available to protect the babies clothing during mealtimes and hands and faces were cleaned after eating.

Aprons were used by the children during messy play activities. All children enjoyed freedom of movement within their care rooms and in the outdoor play areas. Babies were observed crawling and exploring their environment and a comfortable chair was in place for the adult caring for babies to sit comfortably to hold and nurse a child as required.

Children's nappies were routinely changed and as necessary throughout the day. A sleep room with a sufficient number of cots were available for the children less than 2 years old requiring periods of sleep. Children slept at set times and sleep could be accommodated outside of this if any child showed visible signs of tiredness during the day.

The children in the Toddler, Wobbler and Pre-school rooms availed of outdoor play in the morning and were appropriately dressed in coats, hats and gloves.

Supporting relationships around children

The children were observed to be content and relaxed within their pre-school rooms.

On the day of the inspection all staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made and soft voice tones were used during all interactions.

Children in the Baby room were observed being held and carried and the staff member was observed to cuddle and soothe one child that was settling.

Family walls were being constructed in each room with family photographs to keep children connected with home and a community wall with pictures of the local area were in place and the children could point out familiar places they knew and had visited.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. A daily written record was maintained and given to parents for the children attending the Baby and Wobbler rooms which outlined food eaten, time nappies were changed, sleep times and any other comments. A mobile phone application shared information and photographs with parents and face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary; email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact.

Physical and material environment

The pre-school rooms were large and bright and constructively planned with areas of interest including, home/kitchen corners, construction, mark making, small world and dress up. The rooms were resourced with suitable age-appropriate play and learning materials and included puzzles, jigsaws, dolls, blocks, animals, cars and books. There was adequate art and craft materials for cutting, gluing and sticking and plenty of paper and crayons, paint and playdough. A wooden wall mounted puzzle added an area of interest in the Toddler room. The Baby room was equipped with plenty of stacking and shape sorter toys, a soft ball pool, climbing cushions, rockers and sensory activities were regularly completed along with messy play activities.

The outdoor play area was equipped with wooden reel tables and stools, a wooden climbing frame with playhouse, slide, ladder and climbing wall. There was a variety of push/pull and ride on equipment, tyres and balance beams and a small tunnel to promote gross motor play and skill. A covered area provided a play space during inclement weather. A water wall and wall mounted chalk boards provided other interest areas in the garden.