

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024MN001				
Name of Service:	Laurelhill Community Childcare				
Address of Service:	Laurelhill, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan				
Eircode:	A75 PK46				
Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Trehy				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	27/11/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>9</td> <td>PM</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	AM	9	PM	1
AM	9	PM	1		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Road Monaghan				
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader				
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Laurel Hill Community Childcare has been operating as a community-based childcare service since September 2024. The service provides a full daycare, part time and sessional service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 8am – 5.30pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children. The service is conducted from a single-storey building located on the grounds of the local primary school in the town of Castleblayney Co Monaghan. The service consists of 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a separate kitchenette area.

Staffing

There were 8 staff employed in the service 6 employed to work directly with the children and 2 who worked solely with the school aged children. In addition, there was 1 other adult present employed in cleaning and cooking duties.

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 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.

(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 system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

There were 9 staff files presented for inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 4 members of staff.
- There was 1 written and validated reference for 4 staff members.
- There was 1 written reference for 1 staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 9 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years as specified in Regulation 23 below.

(2)(d) Following a review of the staff files presented and available on the day of inspection, international police vetting was available for the 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that all 6 members of staff who worked directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) One staff member did not have 2 written and validated references.
Three staff members did not have a 2nd written and validated reference.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) The registered provider has ensured that the HR file contains two recent, validated references for each employee and casual worker. The registered provider has spoken with the referees and dated contact with them. The registered provider has given assurance that no employee will be allowed to commence work within the service until references are in the possession of the service and have been validated, regardless if the employee is known or has previously worked with the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of written and validated references x 5.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

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 were an adequate number of adults working directly at all times with the children attending the early years' service.

(2) When the inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection, the adult to child ratios were correct.

The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection:

- In the Preschool Room there were 9 children aged between 2 years and 10 months to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members.

A third member of staff arrived at the premises at 12.15pm.

(8) The registered provider ensured there were 2 members of staff available on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(g) There was no Nappy Changing Policy in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(g) A Nappy Changing Policy has been compiled for the service.

All staff have been made aware of the policy and have been given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the nappy changing procedure. New staff will be required to review all policies of the service and given a chance to discuss them with senior staff so they are confident of all aspects of the policies and how they relate to our everyday operation within the service.

Any questions raised will be explained by senior staff to ensure new staff are aware of how policies are conducted in our everyday running within the service

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of policy.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted, and the non-compliance has been addressed.

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 examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children had free movement in the care rooms and had a change of environment to the outside area on the day of inspection.
- Lunches were brought in by the children and consisted of fruit, bread, waffles, yoghurts and cheese and drinks. Assistance was given to children to open foodstuffs, support and encouragement was given by staff to children by the staff to eat their lunch. The children were afforded plenty of time to finish their food. A warm snack of beans on toast was offered to the 4 children who were present at 12.30pm and further snacks offered again at 1.40 and also 2.40pm.
- The person in charge stated that a hot dinner is served every day at 4pm which is brought over from the main school kitchen and on the day of inspection was a chicken dinner.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting and supervision provided. Children who required their nappies to be changed had them changed in a timely manner.
- There was a separate "cosy area" where the children could go to relax, rest or take a break from activities if they so wished. In addition, there were daybeds available for any child staying on a full day care basis and who would require a sleep.

Supporting relationship around children

- In the Preschool Room staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff members and the children were observed to actively seek out staff members. The staff were

observed to play down at the children’s level, providing and encouraging age-appropriate activities and conversations. Encouraging words and conversations were observed during activities, for example “*did you enjoy that artwork, and “great work”*”.

- Transitions between activities were smooth and minor behavioural issues were dealt with swiftly and did not escalate with staff intervening with “*we have to take turns is that ok?*”
- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up and through the use of an electronic application.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment was available in the Preschool Room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were defined interest areas in both care rooms which included a home corner, messy area with sand, book area, water trays and art supplies and a writing area. There was also equipment and toys to enhance fine motor development, to encourage sensorial play, push along toys, small world toys, dress-up clothing and construction blocks and cars.

Programme Of Activities.

- The children were observed to take part in a glitter art activity. Free painting, fingerprint acorns and squirrels and paper plate art were on display in the Preschool Room.
- There was evidence of short and long-term planning in the room.

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

The registered provider did not 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:

Infection Control:

1. The following infection control and cross contamination risks were observed during nappy changing:

- The staff member did not wear an apron during nappy changing.
 - The staff member was observed to assist a child to wash their hands after getting their nappy changed while wearing the same gloves they used to change the nappy.
 - The nappy changing mat was not cleaned after use and placed straight back into the cupboard.
2. The daybeds were stored in the staff sanitary accommodation /nappy changing area, this is an infection control risk.
 3. The children's lunches were not stored appropriately in the fridge and were left in the children's bags.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The person in charge confirmed the staff now wear apron's, wash the children's hands and clean the nappy changing mat after use. A Nappy Changing Policy has been compiled for the service. All staff have been made aware of the policy and have been given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the nappy changing procedure. New staff will be required to review all policies of the service and given a chance to discuss them with senior staff so they are confident of all aspects of the policies and how they relate to our everyday operation within the service.

All existing staff have been afforded time to review all service policies. Any new staff member appointed will need to review all policies prior to commencement of employment. Any questions raised will be explained by senior staff to ensure new staff are aware of how policies are conducted in our everyday running within the service.

2. The day beds are now stored in the entrance area. The service does not have any sleepers at present but day beds and linen are washed thoroughly once a week to ensure they are ready and available for any child needing a rest.

Specific area for daybeds and drawer specified for linen to be stored. Label placed to identify where daybeds must be kept.

3. Any food sent from home with the child which requires refrigeration will be placed in the fridge within the room until the child is ready to consume it. Children are encouraged to open their lunch boxes and give in any food needing refrigerated when they arrive at preschool.

The Healthy Eating Policy has been updated to specify food will be refrigerated as needed. Staff will encourage the children to look through their lunch and refrigerate as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Copies of policies submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting documentation was submitted to the Inspectorate for review. The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response and the non-compliances have been addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The care room temperature at 10.30am was recorded at 15.3 °C and at 13.9 °C in the staff toilet/ nappy changing area. These temperatures are not within the acceptable room temperatures of 18 -22 °C. It is acknowledged that the person in charge did adjust the radiator settings however the room temperature remained cool and when the temperature was re-checked at 11.50am it was 15.2 °C.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The electrician has been contacted and the heating systems have been set to start and stop at more suitable times to allow the room to maintain an acceptable temperature throughout the day. The temperature is checked on the thermometer located in the room daily.

The registered provider has agreed a regular maintenance arrangement with the electrician in order to monitor the heating system and its effectiveness.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed. This will be for review at the next inspection.