

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024WW005		
Name of Service:	Little Bunnies Montessori		
Address of Service:	Parochial Hall, Novara Avenue, Bray, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A98 EK71		
Name of Registered Provider:	Aisling Walsh		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12/12/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM 11
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon		
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

This service is located in parochial hall in Bray town, Co Wicklow. It is one of three services operated by the registered provider. The premises consists of two playrooms, two sanitary areas, a kitchen, staff room, an office and an entrance hallway. The outdoor play area for the service is sited at the back of the premises. The service is registered to provide part-time and sessional care for a maximum of 44 pre-school children aged two to six years and the hours of operation are between 09.00- 14.00.

Staffing

Presently there are five childcare staff employed. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was present also.

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

As this was the first inspection following the opening of the service this was an announced inspection 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 inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(2)(a), (b), (2)(a) -(d), and (4) Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1) and (3) Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health welfare and development of child

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safety. This finding is 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 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

(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

(2) Files for six adults were reviewed.

(a)(b) Twelve written and validated references were available for six adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 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 available for two adults who had been employed outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)
Five adults employed held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) It could not be verified if one staff member had a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or the equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A copy of the certificate of qualification was sent to DECDIY for verification. It was confirmed that the person has a qualification in childcare.

Going forward all certs will be checked for new staff prior to them starting employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the letter from the DECDIY.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 9(4).

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) There were five adults present working directly with twenty-three pre-school children throughout the period of the inspection. The registered provider was also present and available to provide assistance if needed.

(3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the morning.

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 Infants and Children

- A healthy nutritious snack provided by the parents of the children, in line with the healthy eating policy of the service were enjoyed by the children on the day of inspection. Staff sat with the children during this time assisting the younger children and engaging the older children in conversation and encouraging them to participate.
- Drinking water was available for the children throughout the morning. Younger children's nappies were changed as required and good engagement in conversation with the children was noted during this time. Older children used the toilet independently and assistance given if required.
- Both rooms had rest areas where a child could take a break during the session if needed. Low beds were also available for the children if required.
- Each room used to the outdoor area where age-appropriate toys and equipment were available.
- The staff were observed to be kind, caring and patient in their interactions with the children.

Supporting Relationships around Children

- The adults present were observed showing warmth and sensitivity towards all of the children in their care.
- The children appeared very relaxed with the staff present, sharing stories about home, family and friends.
- There was evidence that the service worked in partnership with parents. It was stated that a verbal handover on the child's day occurred at collection time for each child. The service also communicated using alternative means such as the service email and phoning.

Physical and Material Environment

- The play resources available to the children were accessible, organised and stored on low level shelving which allowed the children to select and replace items and materials of interest.

- There was an adequate amount of age-appropriate furniture and equipment available in the rooms. Equipment included Montessori equipment, construction, toy animals, puzzles and a library.
- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in the rooms.
- A secure outdoor area with an artificial grass surface was located at the rear of the premises. Play equipment available include play-house, climbing frame, slides and sand play.

Non-Compliance Information

The ambient temperature of the sanitary area off the Hutch room was 11.4°C- 12.2 °C. The area was too cold to provide a comfortable environment for the children while they were having their nappy changed or using the toilet. An ambient of between 18.0°C – 22°C is required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new radiator was supplied and fitted in the sanitary to ensure that the temperature is maintained between 18.0°C – 22°C.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the radiator in place in the sanitary area.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 19(1)(a).

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

General Safety:

One child in the Hutch room had a medical condition requiring two injections to be available in the event of an emergency. In the event of this child needing treatment the effectiveness of this child’s treatment could be compromised for two reasons:

- A second injection was not available.
- The injection which was available had expired on 10/24.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The child in question no longer attends the service. Going forward if a child needs an injection that there are two injections on site and that they are within date.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23 General Safety.