

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LH098

Name of Service: The Wendy House

Address of Service: Mountbagnal
Riverstown
Dundalk
Co. Louth

Email Address: thewendyhouse@eircom.net

Name of Registered Service Provider: Wendy Gilsenan

Type of service registered: Sessional ☒

Date(s) of Inspection: 1 6 0 3 2 0 2 1

No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: AM 13

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Child Wellbeing Centre
Castleblayney
Co. Monaghan

Inspection undertaken by: M. Flood
Title: Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health, Welfare and Development	Safety

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

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Description of Service	The Wendy House is a privately owned service that has been in operation since 2004. The service provides sessional care and education to pre-school children aged from 2 to 6 years of age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 22 children and operates from 9:00am to 12:00pm each weekday.
Premises	This service operates from the Registered Providers own home. It is located in a rural area of Co. Louth and has parking onsite for drop off and collection. The premises consist of a purposely developed play room and an outdoor play area to the front and rear of the building.
Staffing	There were four adults which included the Registered Provider and one student present on the day of inspection, who were observed working with the preschool children.
Methodology	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	The Inspector would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the Registered Provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information:

Following a review of the staff roster and a discussion with the Registered Provider it was confirmed there was 1 new student present in the service since the last inspection. This file was reviewed on the day of the inspection

(2)(a) and (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for the student present in the service.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for the student present.

(d) Documentary evidence of a processed International police vetting was available for the student present who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(7) The registered provider, staff and student present on the day of the inspection confirmed to the Inspector that they received a copy of the revised and updated policies, procedures and statements for the service via email.

Documentary evidence was available which detailed the training undertaken by the staff in the service on areas relating to hand-washing, PPE, and the policies and procedures for returning to work during the covid-19 pandemic.

When questioned by the inspector, staff members were familiar and detailed the procedures to be undertaken in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. The Registered Provider confirmed that one staff member had been designated as the "Covid-Officer" for the service. This staff member has received specific training and their role is to co-ordinate information sharing regarding Covid-19 with the staff members in the service.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information:	Documentary evidence was available on the day of the inspection of the updated policies, procedures and self-assessments for the pre-school service. These documents were submitted to the Inspectorate via email following the inspection. All documents were in keeping with Schedule 5 and were found to have been updated to appropriately guide practice, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff present confirmed that they had received a copy of the documents and the Registered Provider confirmed that all parents were provided with the information in the form of the "Parents Information Booklet".
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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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) *Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—*
(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information:	(1) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service. (2) On the day of the inspection when the inspector arrived to the service at 10:30am the following pod system were in operation: • Pod 1: There were 3 adults working directly with the 13 pre-children present. The Registered Provider and one student were also present in the service.
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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

Compliance Information:

(1) (a) The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service by:

Basic Needs

- The personal care provided met the needs of the children attending. The children were supervised and encouraged with hand washing and songs were used to support this.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children and assistance was equally provided if required.
- The children were observed to happily engage in a variety of activities with the staff present both indoors and outdoors. The children were afforded many opportunities for outdoor play during the inspection.
- The children were given adequate time to eat their lunch and the adults provided assistance as required. Lunches were provided by the parents and stored appropriately in the refrigerator within the playroom.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- The children were observed to interact positively and comfortably with the staff members present and sought out staff when necessary.
- The adults demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children as evidenced in the positive use of language and soft tones in the play room.
- The Registered Provider stated that a variety of methods of communication with parents is used including phone calls, emails, parent information booklets and a multiplatform messaging app are used.

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.

Compliance Information:

It was observed that the Registered Provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

INFECTION CONTROL:

- The service operates a 'play pod' system where the staff and children attending are consistent.
- The service completed a 'verification of the child's fitness to return to the service on re-opening. Documentary evidence of this was also maintained.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

The service manager confirmed that the parents are questioned verbally at 'drop off' about the child's fitness to attend the service on a daily basis and this is also documented daily.

- A revised drop off and collection policy was observed in operation where one adult drops / collects the child at the main entrance to the service. No adult is permitted inside the building. Additionally, the service operated staggered times for drop off and collection to further minimise contact.
- All staff when questioned were familiar with the Covid-19 incident plan and steps to be implemented should a child or staff member becomes unwell while attending the service.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper towels to support effective hand washing practices. There were a number of hand sanitising dispensers positioned around the service, within the care room and outside the main door.
- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch, after toileting and outdoor play. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures. Child friendly visual aids were also in use to support practices.
- The premises and toys observed on the day of the inspection were in a clean condition. The staff, when questioned were able to discuss the daily and weekly cleaning procedures carried out in the service.
- Mouthed toys were appropriately removed after use and maintained in line with the services infection control policy. When questioned by the inspector the staff were able to communicate the procedures involved in maintaining the mouthed toys on a daily basis.
- The playroom was well ventilated during the inspection and the staff maximised the opportunities for outdoor play in the renovated outdoor play areas.

GENERAL SAFETY:

- The external gates were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving and were inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- Up to date fire maintenance records were available and in accordance with best practice guidelines.