

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY053
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare Santry
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Address of Service:	Block F Milner Square, Shanowen Road, Santry, Dublin 9
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Eircode:	D09 EF40
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	65
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	JA. McKimm and C. Harte
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Santry is a privately operated full day care service; one of 18 services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide service full day care, part-time and sessional childcare to a maximum of 94 children aged 0-6 years. The service is comprised of six care rooms, a kitchen, office and a staff room and operates from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm from Monday to Friday from the ground floor of an apartment complex. The service also participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am-12pm daily. The care rooms are as follows:

Room name	Age group
Wobbler 1	12-24 months.
Wobbler 2	18 -24 months
Toddler 1	2 years-2 years 6 months
Toddler 2	2 years 6 months – 3 years
Preschool 1	3-4years
Preschool 2	3-5 years

Two enclosed outdoor areas are available to the side and to rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and employs 28 adults to work in the service. Adults include the person in charge, two deputy persons in charge, who work in a supernumerary capacity, 19 childcare staff, four auxiliary staff; a chef, a cleaner and two maintenance staff and two operations executives who work across other premises owned and operated by the registered provider. On the day of the inspection, the person in charge, a deputy person in charge, two operations executives, 14 childcare staff, and three auxiliary staff were present. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 and health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 32- Complaints

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler room 1, Toddler room 1, Toddler room 2 and the outdoor play area. Regulation 11 was inspected across all rooms

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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.

(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;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that;
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or one of the deputy persons in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that nineteen new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. The files of the nineteen staff were reviewed, in addition the file for an operations executive not previously reviewed was conducted. A Garda vetting disclosure for the registered provider was reviewed along with garda vetting for two adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (a) Thirty-five validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for twenty-two adults were reviewed. 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 fifteen adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to nineteen adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Sixteen adults 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, Disability, and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

- (7) Discussion with staff members and management and a review of a sample of 8 staff induction forms and 8 staff support and supervision records, demonstrated that the service was operating at variance to its supervision and support policy regarding the regularity and scheduling of these meetings. It is acknowledged that staff induction consisted of a variety of topics including behaviour management, infection control and child safeguarding.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (7) Staff supervision support and supervision policy has been reviewed and updated. Staff performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis, and individual goals will be set to support each staff member in their role, identify areas for development, and ensure they have the appropriate support to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (7)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured there was adequate staff available to the children at all times during the day fourteen staff were working directly with sixty-five children on the morning of inspection and fourteen staff working directly with sixty-five children on the afternoon of inspection. The person in charge and the deputy person in charge was available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children.

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-*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (b) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending on day one of the inspection:
- Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily routine of the service. There was a calm atmosphere in the care rooms.
 - Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during their interactions with the children. For example, when young children required emotional reassurance staff were observed to comfort them.
 - Family photos, a birthday wall and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms fostering a sense of belonging and creating a welcoming environment.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Children had the freedom to move throughout their care room and play with activities of their choice.
- The manager reported all meals and snacks are prepared by the chef, and they were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in groups when eating. Adults sat with the children, engaging them in conversation and promoting social skills. On the day of inspection, a morning snack of a selection of fruits followed by dinner of lasagne and an afternoon snack of cheese wraps was served.
- Children were assisted to wear bibs during mealtimes and drinks were available throughout their meal.
- Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly. Adults used this time for warm one to one interaction with the children. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.
- Soft music and dimmed lighting helped create a restful environment during sleep time. Staff were observed to offer gentle comfort as children settled for sleep.
- All children had regular access to outdoor play throughout the day of inspection. Staff were observed to encourage and extend children's learning when they were outside.

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

General Safety:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured with keypad access to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- Storage presses were observed to be secured and inaccessible to children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- The kitchen was observed to be inaccessible to children throughout the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand drying facilities. Both staff and children were observed to show familiarity with routine handwashing after nappy changing, before mealtimes and outdoor play.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were cleaning schedules on the display and updated in the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.

Administration of Medication:

- A documented care plan clearly outlining the procedures was available for a child on emergency medication, and staff reported being familiar with these procedures.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were noted to be aware of safe sleep practices and children were observed to be monitored while sleeping every 10 minutes. Staff discussed how they checked the breathing, position, and colour of each child.
- Outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Children under two years of age were provided with a cot for sleeping.
- Children's nappy creams were individually labelled and bed linen was stored in labelled boxes on a shelving units and presses that were inaccessible to children.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. There were notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in the hallway and in the care rooms. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Two beds in use in Toddler room 2 had cracked frames which posed a potential safety and pinch risk to children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

2. A cistern in children's sanitary accommodation had a cracked lid which may pose an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Two beds with cracked frames were immediately removed from use and replacement beds sourced. Going forward daily visual checks will form part of managements checks of equipment in the service.

Infection Control:

2. The cracked cistern was replaced. Management will ensure that any potential infection control risks are identified through daily risk assessments. Staff will also be required to check for any damage or defects each day and report any concerns to management promptly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic information submitted

Infection Control:

2. Photographic information submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

(1) There was a complaints policy maintained which outlined the following:

- (a) The procedures to be followed when making a complaint.
- (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
- (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.

(2)

- (a) The registered provider ensured a mechanism was in place to maintain a record of any complaints received.
- (b) A sample review of records maintained since January 2025 demonstrated complaints were managed in line with service policy.

(3) All records and documentation requested by the inspection team were available for review.