

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

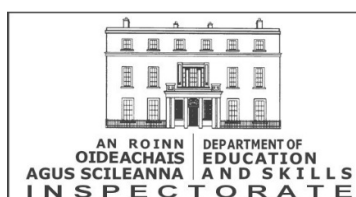
Department of Education and Skills

**Early-Years Education-focused Inspection
Report**

**Adapt Children and Youth Services
09LY0043**

Limerick City

Date of Inspection: 24 November 2016



CONTEXT OF SETTING

Adapt Children and Youth Services provides a morning only Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its curriculum comprises a therapeutic, play-based programme underpinned by Montessori principles. The number of children and the group of children attending the ECCE programme may fluctuate within one yearly cycle. On the morning of inspection, three children and two practitioners were present and three younger children joined the programme for forty minutes. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting will be found in the appendix of this report.

AREA 1

QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the context to support the children's learning and development is very good
- There is a very welcoming, warm, respectful and caring atmosphere in the setting. Parents and children are greeted individually by the practitioners on arrival.
- The setting applies a key person approach very effectively and the children presented as very relaxed, confident and securely attached.
- The routine and well-resourced environment are highly effective in supporting children as active agents in their own learning.
- Social interaction, self-care skills, independence and healthy eating are very successfully encouraged and promoted during snack time.
- There are many opportunities to bring children and families together. These include the availability of family rooms, culture days, and opportunities for the children meet with their younger siblings every day to play.
- Transitions within the daily routine are minimal and managed very effectively. A timer was used effectively during the morning of the inspection. A daily routine detailing some aspects of the programme such as playtime, snack time, outdoor time and small-group time, is displayed on the practitioners' noticeboard. The routine is flexible and responsive to the needs of the specific group of children in attendance on a specific day.
- The practitioners affirm, praise and encourage acceptable behaviours very effectively. Those behaviours include turn-taking, co-operating and making requests calmly.

Actions advised

- To further support children's developing sense of well-being and security, practitioners are advised to create in collaboration with the children a visual, pictorial display of the flexible daily routine and to display it at the children's eye level so that they can refer to it.
- Practitioners are advised to use more visual prompts and supports when communicating with children who have English as an additional language and to familiarise themselves with frequently used words and phrases in the children's home languages. Display of photographs of the children engaging with the materials while in the service is also advised. Such photographs can be displayed on walls or available to the children in albums. These additions will further support children's sense of belonging and identity.

AREA 2

QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support the children's learning and development is very good
- The current programme of activities provided for the children who attend the ECCE Programme has a strong emphasis on their emotional and physical well-being and on therapeutic play. The children meet their siblings and the younger cohort of children who use the service every day to play. On the morning of the inspection, the children demonstrated motivation and interest as they joined their siblings at the playdough and sensory-rich discovery trays that were set up by the practitioners.

- A thematic approach to curriculum planning currently exists. This is influenced in the main by the seasons, children's birthdays, science week and cultural or local events. Children's needs are effectively taken into account in the planning of the learning experiences and activities and in the addition of new resources.
- Assessment of individual children happens and documentation of the outcomes of that assessment are maintained. This includes notes, format sheets and narratives from the child's key person. The documentation captures the play activities that the child enjoyed, how the child appeared, and how they engaged with peers and with practitioners.
- The children are very well respected as whole human beings. Their feelings and learning needs are very much a priority of their key person.
- The practitioners display very effective teaching and interaction strategies to facilitate children's learning. These include reflective listening, prompting, gentle guidance to stay on task, and giving clear boundaries during messy play.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are very well maintained and resourced. They are inviting, calm, spacious and the materials are beautifully presented and labelled. The layout and variety of resources and material encourage socio-dramatic play, large construction play, creative play, mark-making, sensory-rich messy play, physical play and language play, both individually and in small groups.
- The practitioners very skilfully encourage social interaction and small-group activities and they follow children's intentions and ideas during play and exploration.
- The practitioners support children in using mathematical language and in their understanding and awareness of mathematical concepts such as size, weight and classification. This was demonstrated during a play theme with small animals and when playing with playdough and the sensory-rich discovery trays.
- The setting has made links with programmes such as Incredible Years. It also liaises with the local County Childcare Committee and play therapists to optimise support for all children.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to utilise the resources in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* with regard to further development of their planning and assessment approaches. This will ensure that their curriculum and planning is informed by the principles and themes of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and *Síolta, the National Quality Framework*. The 'Learning record' template is one of the many resources available that will support practitioners in broadening their current assessment of children's learning and development to take more account of children's learning dispositions, skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children demonstrate positive learning dispositions such as using their imagination and being absorbed, interested and purposeful during their play activities.
- The children present as very relaxed, emotionally secure and confident in exploring the materials, initiating play themes, and declining requests from other children and practitioners.
- The interactions of some children during snack time and other activities on the inspection day revealed positive pro-social skills, good communication skills and enjoyment in being together. This was mainly demonstrated through the children's body language, smiling, being helpful to one another, making requests, taking turns when feeding the fish, and sharing their thoughts with one another.
- Some children show an ability to engage with group stories.
- The children clearly understand the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and what is expected of them. For example, they kept the loose coconut within the tray when prompted; they placed their materials back when finished using them; they cleaned the tables before lunch and eagerly put their coats on when going outside.

Actions advised

- The creation of a jobs chart in collaboration with the children that has their names and photographs is advised. This will nurture their sense of belonging and responsibility for caring for the environment.
- To further support and nurture children's expressive language and literacy development, the practitioners are advised to have more one-to-one time for storytelling and looking at books with the children. Practitioners are also advised to have resources available to the children to help them to retell familiar stories. Examples of useful resources in this regard include story sacks, magnetic boards or story boards.
- The practitioners are advised to consider setting up, in collaboration with the children, some group games or activities with a common goal that the children can work on, for example, a block construction of a local landmark they know, a large creative art project with clay, or a fun socio-dramatic play theme. This will further support the children in making friends, communicating and building relationships.
- Having photographic documentation available and accessible to the children that show them as individuals and as part of a group engaging in various activities and experiences of the programme is advised.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good
- There is a very strong sense of commitment, collegiality and teamwork amongst the practitioners and management with a very low turnover of staff. This creates a positive working environment and continuity and security for the children. The management and practitioners meet weekly to discuss children's needs and every two months to discuss and reflect on curriculum changes, the transition programme within the service, and contact with siblings.
- Parents and children have weekly meetings with their key worker to ensure there is continuity between home and the setting.
- The practitioners have extensive ongoing in-house peer training and support. This includes play therapy, mindfulness training, ideas for sensory and messy play activities, and input to further their understanding of young children's behaviour.
- There is an extensive range of policies and procedures available to the parents. The transition policy and procedures are very respectful of both children and families. Some questions on the enrolment form ask about family routines and sibling contact.

Action advised

- The management and practitioners are advised to use the resources and self-evaluation templates in the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* – particularly those in the 'Curriculum foundations' and 'Professional practice' sections - in order to guide their ongoing reflection on and review of their programme.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the management and practitioners to implement the actions advised above is very good as demonstrated in the professional dialogue during the post-inspection feedback meeting.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Very Good

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

Adapt Child and Youth service welcomes this report and would like to acknowledge the discovery and positive feedback.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Adapt Child and Youth service is a unique childcare facility as we work primarily with children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. The staff work with children from the experimental mode of Sue Jennings to support children who have witnessed domestic abuse as well as adhered to Aistear principles and practice.