



Ballinderreen Playgroup Ltd.
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Dear Parents & Guardians,

On foot of the disturbing revelations about some crèches as shown in the RTE Prime Time Investigates programme on Tuesday, 28th., we would like to reassure you about the standard of care your child receives at Ballinderreen Creche and update you on the policies and systems we have in place to give your child the best possible experience in our care.

- All staff at the crèche are dedicated childcare workers with extensive qualifications and/or experience across the service. They are supported by their Manager, who is also a qualified childcare professional, and by a voluntary Board of Management drawn from parents who use the service and members of the local community. The Board is further supported and receives training from Galway City & County Childcare Committee, which operates under the auspices of the Department for Children and Youth Affairs. As well as monthly team meetings staff receive regular 1-on-1 supervisory meetings with both the Manager and the Staff Liaison sub-committee of the Board of Management. Ongoing training needs are addressed at these meetings and an annual training budget is made available for the ongoing professional development training of all staff. Recent training has included the Aistéar Learning Through Play programme and First Aid refresher courses.
- Our crèche has been inspected by the HSE on three occasions since it opened in 2005. On the first two inspections it was fully compliant with all regulations. In the 2012 inspection it was found to be non-compliant in three areas:
 - Regulation 8 – Management and Staffing
In the case of just 2 staff members, verbal rather than written references had been obtained and the HSE required that these be followed up with written references. Garda vetting for the most recent member of staff had been applied for but not received by the time of the inspection and police vetting for a number of staff who had previously worked outside the jurisdiction was not on file. **All relevant paperwork has since been obtained and is now on file at the crèche.**
 - Regulation 28 – Facilities for Rest & Play
Three children in the Junior Toddler room who were under the age of 2 at the time of inspection were sleeping on mattresses rather than in cots. (It should be noted

that this had been agreed with the relevant parents and had always been the practice at the crèche, which had not proven problematic in previous inspections). **Portable costs have since been purchased expressly for any children under 2 in this room.** A small section of the outdoor matting was found to be worn and was rectified immediately.

o Regulation 14 – Records

Since written references and garda vetting documents were not on file for some staff members as outlined above, the crèche was found not to be compliant with this regulation.

All inspection reports have also drawn attention to the *“warm and positive interactions between staff and children”*, the *“well laid out, child friendly, bright and warm”* playrooms and that the *“Children’s emotional well-being and social development is well facilitated within this service. We observed staff members providing regular, positive and meaningful interactions with the children in their care. The dignity of children was observed to be supported at all times.”*

- It is the policy of the Ballinderreen Creche that play is the most appropriate medium of learning for pre-school children and staff work hard to plan and provide varied curricula that are child centred and play based. Children have the opportunity to develop and grow, learning at their own pace with the support and guidance of staff. It is important for children to have structure and routine to their day, which is reflected in the curricula whilst allowing for a degree of flexibility. The types of play the children are involved in are adapted throughout the year to suit the development of each child. Children also have plenty of opportunities for free play to encourage independence. The 2012 HSE Inspection also noted that *“Each child is enabled to participate actively in the daily routine. The activities provided promote the children’s fine and gross motor, emotional and cognitive and social development. The service provider engages in daily, weekly and termly planning. There is an excellent overall broad programme of activity in place in the service.”*
- Great care is taken in the provision of a healthy, balanced diet to the children including a range of hot meals and cold snacks throughout the day, as per HSE guidelines, and with due regard for any children with allergies in our care.
- We can confirm that all incidents and accidents are fully reported, documented and disclosed to parents. The daily record sheets for children in the service are accurate and truthful.
- Children are never strapped into chairs, shouted at, intimidated or threatened. This goes

against the entire ethos of the crèche and the values upheld by all staff in the service. We value and respect each individual child put into our care and operate an open-door policy for all parents and guardians to engage with us on the care of their children.

Finally, the Board would like to thank you for your continued support of the Ballinderreen Creche and to reiterate our full confidence and trust in our staff, who we value greatly. Please feel free to contact the Manager or any member of the Board if you have any concerns or would like to discuss your child's care further.

Kind regards,

Anna Downes (Chair)

On behalf of the Board of Management of Ballinderreen Creche

Transforming Ireland

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