

Inspection Report

2023-2024

Toddlers United Playgroup

Child Day Care Centre

29 September 2023

**Under the Regulation of Care Act 2013 and
Regulation of Care (Care Services) Regulations 2013**



DHSC

We carried out this inspection under Part 4 of the Regulation of Care Act 2013 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements, regulations and standards associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service.

We carried out this announced inspection on 29 September 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

Service and service type

Toddlers United is a child day care centre. This means they provide day care for one or more children under the age of eight for more than two hours in the same day and is not a private dwelling.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

To get to the heart of people's experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our key findings

The manager and the staff have developed good relationships with parents. We observed parents greeted at the nursery in a positive and respectful manner.

Parental feedback confirmed that parents were happy with the care provided at the nursery and that they have a good relationship with the nursery staff.

Two 'actions' highlighted from the previous inspection have not been completed, these are covered in this report.

Improvement is needed in completing documentation, more detail and up to date information required.

The rooms used by the nursery need some redecoration.

The following are comments from parental feedback

'I really appreciate the daily private facebook group messenger photos and updates. I also appreciate the newsletters. I have been told I can visit anytime. I feel comfortable approaching TU. My **** seems very happy there'.

'Lots of outdoor activities, lots of singing and body movement. It looks like there is lots of inclusivity'.

'The staff are all very welcoming and always have smiles on their faces'.

'The days are filled with a number of different activities to assist with all aspects of learning and development. I know that they are also ensuring my **** will be hitting all the requirements needed to begin school next September'.

'They are friendly, welcoming and real. They let the children be children and celebrate all of their unique personalities. They are phenomenal at encouraging and facilitating outdoor play. During the previous year my child has attended, every week she has took part in a different craft activity.

Every fortnight to a month, they have an outside visitor or a party or celebration which adds to my child's overall experiences and memories of nursery such as the pony visit or Halloween party/disco. The staff have been consistent, so that my child has a relationship with every member. They are a play focused nursery and that is exactly what we wanted for our child. They build solid early years development goals to ensure the children have a secure basis for future learning when they move to reception and primary school. Every day the children develop motor skills, fine motor skills, social and emotional skills – through play! They don't even realise it's learning'.

About the service

Toddlers United is registered to provide care for a maximum of forty children at any one time, aged 2 years and above. The provider does not own the premises but has a contract with the owners for use of the facility within contracted times.

The building provides a large open playroom with plenty of space for children to play and learn. There is a separate room for office use and for children to have a sleep if required. The kitchen has a 'hatch' opening that enables the staff to continue to view the play area. Toilets are located in the corridor behind the playroom.

There is a dedicated outside play area to the rear of the property and a large field to the front. The field to the front provides an area for children to go on nature walks without having to exit onto a main road.

Registered manager status

The service has a registered manager. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of Inspection

This inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2023 and March 2024.

Inspection activity started on 28 August 2023. An unannounced inspection was undertaken on 29 September 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we received about the service since the last inspection. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR), notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues.

Parental Questionnaires were sent to parents to gather feedback about the service

During the inspection

We used an observational framework for inspection, this is a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of people/children.

C1 Is the service safe?**Our findings:**

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that children were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

Staffing ratios and recruitment

There had not been any new staff recruited since the last inspection and therefore no 'new' staff files to check.

Staff files showed that pre-employment checks had been carried out on existing staff and the outcome recorded.

Disciplinary process is written into the contracts with the staff.

Attendance records showed that staff/child ratios were being maintained. The minimum requirement is 1 staff to 8 children. On the day of the inspection there were twenty children and six staff (including the manager) present.

Improvements lessons learned

There were policies and procedures in place, for example safeguarding children and accident recording.

The manager confirmed that they had not had any safeguarding children concerns. Any accidents/ incidents that required 'notifying' to the registration and inspection team had been completed.

Inspection Findings

C2 Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that children’s care, learning and development are supported and achieving good outcomes. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

Supporting and developing children’s care and development needs

We observed that the staff managed children’s behaviour effectively. Positive reinforcement by praising the children for good behaviour and acknowledging when they had completed a task successfully.

Children were reminded to share toys and to take turns when playing games. We observed a child telling one of the staff that another child had taken a toy off them. The staff listened to the child and spoke to the other child in an appropriate manner using language that the child would understand. Both children moved on to play happily.

Inspection Findings

C3 Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved and treated children with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect. The service does require improvements in this area.

This service was found to be caring.

Ensuring children are being treated with kindness, respect and compassion

We observed the staff interact in a positive manner with the children. The team spoke using language that was age appropriate and at a level and pace of understanding.

The staff sat and worked alongside the children during various activities and embrace the uniqueness of a child to participate in an activity the child choose to do.

We observed children painting, a child had mixed two colours together to make a third colour. The staff and child talked about the colours used and what the colour was that the child had made. The child was praised and appeared to enjoy what they had created.

Another child was using glue to stick pieces of tissue paper onto a piece of card and making a piece of 'pumpkin pie'. The staff were aware of the skills, including; 'hand to eye coordination' and recognition of various colours and holding utensils used to complete the tasks.

Children were observed throughout the inspection to be praised for good behaviour including helping to tidy up and getting ready to go out.

Maintaining children's dignity, privacy and promoting independence

The toilets were placed in close proximity to the playroom. There were doors on the individual cubicles and children were supervised when using the toilets. There was also an area for changing nappies.

There were low level 'sleep' beds for those children that required a sleep in the afternoon. The manager stated that the children always slept on an identified bed with bedding for that child. We spoke to a staff member who stated she did not know what bedding was assigned to which child. There needs to be a system to identify individual bedding that all the staff are aware of. The manager who also confirmed that the bedding was washed once a week.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- A system to be implemented to ensure that all the staff are aware of which bedding is assigned to which child.

This improvement is required in line with Regulation 13 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Service recipients plan.

Inspection Findings

C4 Is the service responsive?

Our findings:

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met children’s needs. The service does require improvements in this area.

This service was found not always to be responsive.

Delivering personalised care

Parents are requested to complete a ‘record of information’ about their child and to include any cultural or additional needs the child may have. The record had a section to include an ‘emergency’ contact number, however this did not state that this should be a person other than a parent that could be contacted in an emergency if parents were not contactable. Therefore this has led to some confusion and can lead to a parent providing their own phone number again.

School aged children are transported in the nursery vehicle to and from school and during the holiday club. We were informed that preschool children did not use the nursery vehicle. There was written permission from parents for school aged children to be transported in the vehicle, however there had not been an individual assessment per child to establish the correct car seat for an individual child.

Any specific festivals the family may celebrate can be included in the ‘planning’ of children’s activities. The manager has stated that they celebrate festivals for example; Chinese New Year and speak to parents to gather information about the festival. The manager has also stated that the team would speak to parents and ensure their wishes are adhered too if they did not want their child to participate in particular activities.

Children’s individual ‘Learning Journals’ were sampled. These were used to record the child’s developmental progress through the staff observations. Photographs and artwork were included along with an explanation to EYFS (early years foundation stages), the framework used to establish the child’s progress and goals to achieve and work towards. From the samples checked the journals were not being completed on a regular basis and there were long periods between observations being recorded. Through discussion with the manager it appeared that not all the staff were contributing to completing the journals. The manager needs to ensure the journals are updated and that opportunities for the staff to complete the records are embraced by them.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- Children’s ‘record of information’ to clearly identify the ‘emergency contact details’ should be someone other than the parents. We recognise that some families may not have any other emergency contact.
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 13 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Service recipients plan.
- Each child must be assessed to establish the safest car seat, booster seat etc to be used for that child
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 13 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Service recipients plan.

- Children's Learning Journals must have regular up dated information to include the child's progress
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 13 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Service recipients plan.

C5 Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture. The service does require improvements in this area.

This service was found to be not always well-led.

Clear vision and strategy in place to deliver high-quality care and promote a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering which achieves good outcomes for children.

We discussed how the manager would handle any conflict between the staff should it arise. Through conversation, the manager gave examples of how she has managed conflict within the staff team. She stated that she would speak to staff individually and then bring them together to resolve the problem. We were also told that if any conflict was observed it would be managed immediately. She had a good clear understanding of managing situations and the need to document the outcomes. We discussed the need to record any conversations in a formal manner and complete all relevant details.

Governance framework in place that ensures responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed.

The manager is aware of her role and responsibilities as a registered manager of a child care service. Notifications had been sent to the registration and inspection team when applicable, for example, notifying of an infectious illness.

Areas of improvement have been recorded throughout this report which highlight the need for good documentation by the manager. These areas have been discussed and how these can be improved and completed.

Continuous learning, improvement, innovation and ensuring sustainability.

The staff training matrix showed that the team had completed mandatory training including first aid and safe guarding children. Training provided by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture have also been available and attended.

We viewed the records for the staff that contained their 'one to one' supervision sessions. The format consisted in an opportunity for the individual along with the manager 'score' themselves on their performance. The staff member would set goals for themselves and how they could achieve these. The records did not record the managers overall assessment or feedback on their performance. Records showed that supervision (referred to as 'review by the manager') occurred twice a year. The importance and relevance of individual supervision was discussed with the manager. This area was addressed at the previous inspection and the need to increase the frequency of supervision.

We sampled the minutes of staff meetings, these included the attendance and an opportunity for the staff to add to the agenda. Areas discussed were recorded. Team meetings took place twice a year and again this was addressed at the last inspection. The manager needs to

increase the frequency of these meetings to provide an opportunity for the staff group to meet and agree on objectives and ideas.

The premises are rented and therefore at the end of the week all information, toys and equipment for the nursery must be packed away. The décor is looking 'tired' and there are areas such as skirting boards and windowsills that need repainting. Some of the wallpaper is also torn off the walls. The responsible person (who is also the manager), must ensure that the areas used by the nursery are maintained in a suitable and good condition and state of repair.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- Staff supervision and team meetings must be held more than twice a year
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 14 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Records
- The rooms used by the nursery must be maintained in a good and suitable state of repair and decoration
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 20 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Fitness of premises for service recipients

If areas of improvement have been identified the provider will be required to produce an action plan detailing how the areas of improvement will be rectified within the timescales identified. The R&I team will follow up and monitor any actions undertaken.