

Funky Factory

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	149131
Inspection date	08 April 2008
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
Setting Address	Garon Park, Eastern Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 4FA
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Registered person	Creating Leisure Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Funky Factory is run by Creating Leisure Limited. It opened in 1996 and operates from a large second floor room at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre in Essex. A maximum of 40 children may attend the provision at any one time. The provision is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30. The holiday scheme is open from 08:30 to 15:45 during school holidays. All children share supervised access to the centre's sport and outdoor facilities.

There are currently 74 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. Children come from the local area.

The provision employs eight staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. Five members of staff are currently attending further training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean environment because staff keep the premises clean and refer to clear rotas and well-written policies and procedures in order to be consistent. For example, concise information is displayed in the kitchen which reminds staff to wash their hands and clean surfaces with anti-bacterial cleaner before preparing food. These effective measures help keep children healthy.

The importance of personal hygiene is taught to children through reminders and repetition so children learn good practices such as hand washing at key times and the reasons for doing so, helping to minimise the spread of germs in the setting.

Children's health needs are effectively met because staff take account of medical conditions, allergies and intolerances. Most staff have up to date first aid certificates and implement sickness exclusion procedures and as a result, the needs of children who are ill or have an accident are sensitively met.

Staff follow food handling procedures and some staff have a Level two qualification in food safety and catering. This together with a healthy eating policy helps ensure children are kept properly nourished through regular drinks, snacks and lunches which are mainly provided by parents. Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the session, helping them to respond to their own thirst and keep hydrated.

Staff plan an abundance of activities throughout the day which help children develop their physical skills, for example, there is frequent access to an indoor soft play area, chances to ride bikes or use the large sports halls for organised movement sessions and games. Staff also take the children outside on nature walks and focus on promoting children's understanding of keeping healthy through fresh air and exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children can play in safety and comfort as the premises have mostly been organised with their needs in mind. However, the areas for children aged under two years do not currently allow them to be kept separate from older children at all times which could compromise their safety. Staff have arranged the premises so children can access a wide range of different activities themselves and can also take time to rest or play quietly. A good range of toys and resources are available to help provide interesting play opportunities for children and to meet their developmental needs.

Staff take steps to ensure that hazards to children are minimised, for example, putting padding around the columns and covering radiators. Regular risk assessments are carried out and the staff ensure children practise fire drills frequently so they are aware of how to leave the building safely in an emergency. As a result of safety measures, children are kept safe in the setting.

Staff are very aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and the manager has attended an advanced child protection course. Most of the staff have also attended basic safeguarding children training to reiterate what procedures to follow if there are concerns about a child. The policies are up to date and refer to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), and all staff

are properly checked and protected from unsupervised contact with anyone who has not been vetted. Consequently, children are safeguarded in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework through training, and information is displayed about this for parents. The framework helps staff meet the needs of the children under three who attend the setting and focuses staff on their developmental needs. There is also relevant information about the six areas of learning and the setting intends to apply for funding for nursery education for three- and four-year-olds. Staff are familiarising themselves with the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in readiness and are already planning a good range of activities, sometimes based on individual children's needs. Staff have recently received training on 'Letters and Sounds' and have successfully begun to introduce some of the concepts into their practice, for example, listening for a particular sound to signify tidy-up time.

A key-worker system is in place for all the children although there is not a firm system to minimise the number of different carers for children under two years which may hinder their emotional well-being. Staff are very caring towards children and interaction is good, helping children to settle well and develop their confidence. Children mainly have free play but this is interspersed by organised activities such as use of the soft play area or snack time. Play activities are varied and interesting, include arts and crafts, imaginative play and use of musical instruments.

At the holiday club, children are given frequent opportunities to build their confidence with each other and to begin to develop friendships with their peers. The staff actively encourage ice-breaking activities in group time so that children learn some interesting information about each other and as a result develop their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is a comprehensive equal opportunity policy which is applied to staff, parents, carers and children. In particular, children are encouraged to respect and value others and are discouraged from making hurtful or unkind remarks. Staff help children to understand that people are different and one of the ways they do this is to learn about aspects of different festivals and cultures. As a result, there is an ethos of making everyone welcome in the setting.

Staff understand that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a designated person who has specialist training for special needs is in place. All staff are aware of the special needs and disability policy to help them with their practice. If children needing extra help attend the setting, regular observations and assessments are carried out to identify and address their needs. The setting is committed to working with other professionals and parents to ensure children have the best possible opportunities and support.

Children's behaviour is very good as staff are consistent and have high expectations. In-house training on behaviour management has enabled staff to use new initiatives. For example, children respond to the sound of a tambourine to stop and begin to help tidy up enthusiastically, with stirring music to help them do it in a timely manner. Staff also have systems in place to manage particular situations and there are monitoring sheets to help identify and modify

children's behaviour in consultation with parents. Children are encouraged to be kind to each other and to help new children join in, and all children get regular praise and encouragement to help them behave positively and build their self-esteem.

A good partnership with parents is developing to help parents continue to be informed about the setting's policies and procedures. Staff have improved their practice taking account of training they have attended on working in partnership with parents. For example, a comprehensive welcome pack has been produced with plenty of relevant information to help parents know how their child will be cared for. In addition, there are specific written guidelines regarding the care of children under two years to set out care practices, to ensure the needs of babies and toddlers are met. Parents comments included their confidence in leaving their toddlers at the setting and how clean they found the setting to be.

The setting obtains all the necessary information regarding children's personal details and staff speak to parents regularly to exchange important information with them. This ensures that parents can influence the care of their children on a daily basis. If there are any concerns raised by parents, there is a system of recording and responding to complaints in a timely manner.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an appropriately organised setting which is consistently improving its systems to ensure it runs smoothly. The manager is supernumerary which allows her time to attend to paperwork, meet with parents and ensure action plans are implemented. She has a clear understanding of the procedures and is updating her qualification to a level 4 to help improve practice. There is also a named deputy manager who is able to lead the setting when necessary to help provide continuity of care for the children.

All staff are aware of their responsibilities and have job descriptions and appraisals to highlight their strengths and address any weaknesses which helps improve the service to children and parents. In addition, there are written operating procedures for the different types of care offered, for example, the children attending for sessional care and the children attending for the holiday scheme. Overall, children's needs are met.

Records, policies and procedures meet the requirements of the National Standards and are available to parents and staff unless confidential. The manager understands the importance of keeping the records updated and reviewing policies and procedures to reflect practices and as a result, the operational plan is comprehensive.

All staff have benefited from a wide range of training recently which has helped them to focus on areas of practice to improve.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the setting was required to;

minimise potential risks to children in relation to the doors to the balcony and guarding on the balcony; develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development; make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint and keep a record of complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken; review

and update induction procedures and staff appraisals to ensure staff have a clear understanding of the provision and their role and responsibilities; and improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations in relation to National Standards 5,6,8,10,11,12 and 14.

The management team have minimised the risks to children associated with the balcony by providing finger safe door closures to both balcony doors. In addition, a safety gate has also been fitted across the front of the balcony doors and as a result, children have no access to the doors or the balcony. All childcare staff including holiday staff attended in-house training on child behaviour management in November 2007, and there is now a comprehensive behaviour folder containing information about training and initiatives. Furthermore, staff know how to manage certain situations and complete record sheets to record incidents. A member of staff has attended training for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a folder is kept with relevant information. As a result, children's behaviour has improved and their behaviour is good. A complaints procedure is now in place with parents and carers made aware of this through the information pack. A complaints folder is available to record complaints and ensure they are managed in a timely manner. This enables parents to influence the care of their children. New staff induction procedures are now in place and staff appraisals are carried out on a yearly basis. A folder containing information about childcare staff is now available. The operational plan has now been updated and all staff are aware of all new policies and procedures now in place. Furthermore, all staff have been given a copy of the National Standards to read and take part in quizzes to keep them aware of the requirements set out. Consequently, the setting operates more effectively and children benefit from improved care.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children under two years do not have access to areas for children over two years except with direct staff supervision
- ensure arrangements for staffing minimise the number of carers for the individual child (this refers particularly to children under two years).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk