

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC124 | | | |
| Name of Service: | Deerpark Community Childcare Services CLG | | | |
| Address of Service: | Family Centre, 47 Deerpark Estate, Bandon, Co. Cork | | | |
| Eircode: | P72 FY89 | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Monika Fortuna | | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | | |
| Date(s) of Inspection: | 14/11/2023 | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 10 | PM | n/a |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23x440 | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | C Stokes | | | |
| Title: | Early Years Inspector | | | |
| 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). | | | | |
| Conditions if applicable | N/A | | | |

Description of service

This sessional service is located in the Family Centre in Deerpark Estate in Bandon town, County Cork. The service is registered to cater for children aged 2 years 5 months to 6 years of age. The service operates from Monday to Friday from 8.45 to 11.45am for 38 weeks of the year. This community setting offers a supportive play-based approach to care and learning for early years from a purpose-built single storey premises with one care room and a multi-purpose hall.

Staffing

The service is run by a registered provider who is setting-based but who does not work directly with children. The service is carried out by the Person in Charge, plus an adult that can deputise as required and 2 additional adults, one of whom is on a Community Employment scheme and is supernumerary. Staff working directly with the children in the service have a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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

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.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured there was a named person in charge (PIC) of operating the service.

(b) In addition, there was a named deputy person in charge (DPIC). The person in charge and DPIC were present on the day of inspection and stated that the PIC or DPIC are always on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place on display on the noticeboard.

(2) The staff recruitment files were examined as part of this inspection.

(a) When the recruitment files of all 5 adults was reviewed two written and appropriately validated references were available in respect of 5 past employers

(b) Two written and appropriately validated references were available in respect of 5 sources other than past employers.

(c) A completed record of Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau was available for the 5 adults.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for 1 adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period exceeding 6 months.

(4) A certificate of a major award in Early Childhood care and education at QQI level 6, on the National Qualification framework was on file for 3 adults. The registered provider who does not work directly with children and the 5th adult who was on a Community Employment scheme did not have a childcare qualification.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3) The care room met the adult/child ratio of 1 to 11 with 10 children and 4 adults present on the day of inspection, including a supernumerary unqualified adult.

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-*
- (a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

Compliance Information

- The morning snacks were served at 10.45am and water was observed to be readily available. Plastic plates were handed out for snack-time. Staff were observed to sit and interact with the children during snack times to make it a social occasion.
- The children in the preschool room were independent using the toilet and staff supported these children appropriately, with gentle reminders for handwashing.
- A quiet area in the preschool room was available for rest beside the library child sized sofas.
- Children were observed to have access to the outdoor area and hall for mobility on the day of inspection.
- There was a calm and engaging atmosphere in the room.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their sense of safety and security in the setting.
- Communication between staff and children was observed to be clear and encouraging.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

Compliance Information

(a) There were adequate and suitable play facilities indoors. The indoor environment was child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out in special interest areas with materials accessible to the children.

- Interest areas included a creative area with arts and crafts, a library with soft area; home corner; construction area, tabletop toys including jigsaws and puzzles; imaginative area with playhouse; and dress up; transport area.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available.
- The outdoor area had interest areas and equipment including bikes, ride on toys, kitchen, slide, sand, and water play.
- The outdoor area had a canopy over the large sand area to facilitate the use of the outdoors in all weather. In addition, there were several shelters including playhouses for shelter, variety and creativity.
- The outdoor area also was laid out to facilitate challenging and stimulating outdoor play with balance beams on a hilly area.
- A hall was available for an additional play space. It was observed to be in use on the day of inspection as an opportunity for mobility and physical activity with an activity with throwing and passing bean bags.

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:

- Blind cords were observed to be secured.
- Internal and external doors were secured on the day of inspection.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was observed to be free of safety concerns or hazards and was fully enclosed.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing with thermostatically controlled hot water, soap and paper towels for drying was observed on the day of inspection.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were available in the children's toilets for paper towel disposal.
- Cleaning of tables was observed prior to and after snack time by the adults.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed at the time of inspection and the registered provider advised that they have no children who require medication attending.

Safe Sleep:

- There are no sleeping children in this service as it is a sessional setting.

Fire Safety:

- No fire safety issues were observed on the day of inspection. Fire doors were not obstructed, and fire drills were conducted monthly for the safe evacuation of the service

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection.
- The registered provider outlined that the service has safe practices for outings such as nature walks and walks around the estate.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children is, always, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Three staff had FAR qualifications valid until September 2025.

(2) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) was available to the children attending the pre-school service always.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept of the fire drills, the most recent drill was dated 24 October 2023.

(b) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept of the firefighting equipment. The service record indicated the fire extinguishers were maintained in January 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was on display on the noticeboard.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b) The fire alarm was serviced on 3 September 2021 and following inspection was serviced on 16 November 2023. There was no record of a fire alarm service for 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded to state that the fire alarm was serviced on 16 November 2023 and the fire safety policy was updated to include twice annual servicing of the fire alarm system.

Supporting documentation submitted

A record for a fire alarm service dated 16 November 2023 was submitted.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance for 22 children attending on a sessional basis valid until 27 March 2024

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From visual inspection the premises appeared of sound and stable structure, well-finished and weather tight.
- (b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. An appropriate security system with a secured entrance door to manage unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service was in place.
- (c) The service was adequately heated, lit, and ventilated. The room was a comfortable temperature, windows were opened for ventilation and natural lighting was supplemented with artificial lighting.
- (d) The premises was suitably cleaned and maintained in a good state of repair.
- (e) An adequate ratio of toilets was in place for children as a 1 to 11 ratio was in place, with 2 toilets and sinks for children. For adults there was 1 adult toilet, a 1 to 8 ratio was in place as required.