

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC135
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Name of Service:	Dromina Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	Ashbrook, Dromina, Charleville, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P56 NH77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Moira Quinn
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Co Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins
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
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Description of service

Dromina Community Play school is a community-based preschool service operating since 2007. The service operates out of a single-story purpose-built building in a quiet residential area off the main road in the village of Dromina. The service is within walking distance of the local national school.

The service provides a part time and sessional service for children aged from 2 to 5 years. The part time service operates from 09.00-13.00 daily and the sessional service from 09.00 to 12.00. The service is also registered to operate a school aged care service which runs a breakfast club from 08.00-09.00 and an afterschool service from 13.30-18.00 daily.

The pre-school service operates for 38 weeks of the year.

The service can cater for 22 preschool children at any one time.

There are two outdoor play areas on the premises on to the front and a newly developed area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are five staff employed in the service, the person in charge who works solely in the office and does not work with the pre-school children and four staff who work directly with the pre-school children.

The staff working directly with the children are appropriately qualified at level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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, the person and deputy 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) The registered provider ensured that—

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy, the staff in the service were aware who these staff were.
- (b) The person in charge or the deputy were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Recruitment records in relation to each of the five staff employed in the service were reviewed.

- (a) Four of the 10 required written and validated references on file were available from past employers.
- (b) Two of the 10 written and validated references on files were from sources other than previous employers.

(c) Records on file demonstrated that each of the five adults that work in the service and have access to children had been Garda vetted.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the adults whose files were up to date.

(4) Each of the four adults working directly with the pre-school children held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) / (b) Four references were not adequate, three references were not dated and the fourth was not validated. Not ensuring the references received for the staff are appropriate and complete may allow staff who may be unsuitable to work with children have access to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) / (b) All references have been dated and validated by the person in charge. The registered provider has committed that all references will be appropriately validated.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a) / (b) The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form is accepted as proof that these references are appropriate.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policy was reviewed and contained the relevant information required to inform parents and to guide staff practice:

- The behaviour management policy.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policy was reviewed and did not contain the required information to guide staff practice or to ensure parents were aware of the requirements of, and practices within the service:

1. The healthy eating policy did not include guidance to staff and parents on the requirements of each of the different meals and snacks served in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The menu guide has been improved and circulated to staff and the service has committed to ensuring no sweets or treats are served in the service. The only drinks allowed will be milk or water.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. The revised menu guide has been received.
2. The healthy eating policy has been received.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence of policies and menus the requirements for this regulation have been met.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1) There were four staff working directly with the 16 children attending the service. One of the staff was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. The children were cared for between two rooms where the four staff and the children moved freely between the two rooms ensuring the children were adequately supported throughout the day. The staff numbers reduced to two adults between the hours of 12.30 and 13.00 when the staff had served lunch to the children remaining on for part-time care.

(4) The registered provider ensured that the adult child ratio was appropriate.

(a) During the operation of the sessional four adults were caring for 16 children.

(b) During the operation of the part-time service there were between two and three adults caring for the eight children who remained in the service for the part-time hours.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 16 children attending the service on the day of inspection. An enrolment form and child record were available for each of the children in attendance. Of these files, 11 were assessed for completeness, (a), (d), (f), (e), (f), (g), (h) & (i) were recorded on all children’s enrolment forms assessed.
- (b) The commencement date for each child could be ascertained on the funding scheme application form.
- (c) The person in charge stated that although no specific space was available to record the final date of attendance of each child, this is written on the form, an example of this record where the child has left the service was observed by the inspector.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (h) The details of attendance for each child were recorded in the attendance book with the time of arrival and departure recorded for each child.
- (i) A staff roster was available and historic records of staff attendance could be ascertained through the time sheets retained by the service.
- (j) The staff stated that no medication had been administered in the service, recording protocols were in place.
- (k) The accidents and incidents were recorded in a specific book and the last seven records where an accident or incident had occurred were reviewed. All seven records were completed with signatures of staff and parents on each form, this indicated appropriate communication with parents/guardians where an incident had occurred.

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

BASIC NEEDS

- The children divided into the two care rooms for snack time and came together as one group for their main meal when the sessional service had finished. The food contained in the snacks was provided by parents/guardians and was observed to be nutritious and healthy. The food for the main meal was provided by the service and on the day of inspection was appropriate.
- The children used the toilet when needed and the children who needed assistance were helped and reminded to wash their hands.
- Children dressed up in coats and hats when going outside and had access to wellingtons when accessing the grass covered area outside.
- The children could rest when required. There were child height couches and mats available and for story time there were circular cushions available for the children to sit on.
- The children could move about freely and there was no restriction on movement observed with both rooms operating as one for most of the day and children were observed to move about freely outside.
- The children who required individual care plans had same available and these were completed by the staff on an ongoing basis. Evidence of team involvement was observed where parent/staff meetings were recorded and minutes given to parents/guardians.
- The temperatures in the care rooms were recorded at 18.5 and 20.1°C in pre-school room 1 and 2 respectively.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- Mealtime was sociable with the staff in both rooms were observed to sit with and assist the children and create a sociable environment where the staff and children shared stories of the upcoming Halloween festivities.
- The staff caring for the children created a supportive environment, assisting each child as required with snacks, building blocks, colouring and in guided play with Zoo animals and dinosaurs.
- Communication with parents and guardians was at drop off and collection and it was observed where staff spent time communicating with parents and these conversations were not rushed.
- Children were observed to play in small and large groups and this play was supported if required or observed and allowed be child led in pre-school room 1.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Both playrooms had appropriate height tables and chairs.
- There was open shelving that was accessible to the children, this allowed the children access the toys they wished to play with and make their own decisions on their activities.
- Sensory play was developed through playing with moulding clay, play with coloured rice and sand in the outdoor area.
- Gross motor development was evidenced outside with children on a climbing frame/puzzle, on a slide or in a hammock and when running around and dancing to the music that was playing through a large speaker.
- Fine motor development was promoted through the use of shape sorters, bricks and blocks and with colouring.
- Imaginary play was developed through the resources available in each of the rooms, the shop and restaurant, the home areas and in the play led by the staff with play animals.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

- There was a plan of activities for each day. The children were aware of the plan and were able to detail the next activity when asked by the staff. Children were given adequate notice of moving activities with 'clean up' songs sang and a timer being used.
- The children were noted to have the opportunity to learn through play: the children's physical and gross motor development was enhanced through outdoor play.
- Speech and language development was enhanced through conversation and storytelling.

- The children's cognitive development was enhanced through block building and playing in areas such as with the play animals, and imaginary play with the shop and restaurant.

OUTDOOR AREA:

There were two outdoor areas. The area to the front of the building was in two sections, the concrete area where the children ran or played with the sand tray. The covered area that had an artificial grass surface had the climbing activities and wall activities located in this area. It was observed the children moved freely from one area to the other and interacted with the staff.

The outdoor space to the rear of the building had been developed this year and was a large grass area, a wood chip area and a large wooden shelter that was enclosed on two sides and open on two sides. The shelter provided space for sand trays, benches and tables and stored the goals for the grass area. The wood chip area was large and had outdoor kitchen activities. The walls were mounted with water play areas. This area was not used on the day of inspection due to the very wet weather that had made the area slippery.

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:

- The main entrance to the building of the service was secured by an electromagnetic lock. This ensured that no child could gain unauthorised access to the outdoors and no unauthorised adult could gain access to the building of the service.
- When playing outside the children were supervised at all times as the wall to the front would not prevent unauthorised access to the service.
- The door which led to the storage area, kitchen and office was secured by a running bolt.
- The fire exit was unobstructed and easily opened on the day of inspection.
- The window openings were out of the reach of the children.
- There were no hot drinks consumed in the care rooms when children were present.
- All toys were in good condition with no pinch or crush points noted.

- Cleaning and disinfection products were stored out of reach or access to the children.
- No loose or exposed electric cables were evident in the care room.
- A risk assessment of the outdoor areas was completed prior to the children going outside to play after snack time. This ensured the area was safe for the children.

Infection Control:

The service followed best practice guidelines in the management of the spread of infection.

- Childrens handwashing and personal hygiene was assisted by the staff.
- The hot water in pre-school room 1 was recorded at 30.2°C and the hot water in the adult toilet was recorded at 26.3°C, this along with paper towels, liquid soap and pedal operated lidded bins adjacent to each sink supported effective hand washing.
- A cleaning schedule was observed and signed by the staff.
- The tables were cleaned before and after snack time with a cleaning product suitable for use with children.
- The perishable items contained in the children’s snacks in both rooms were stored in a fridge to prevent contamination and potential illness from perishable items contained in the snacks.
- The school bags in each of the care rooms were stored off the ground on dedicated hooks for each child.

Administration of Medication:

- It is not routine in the service for medication to be administered. No episodes of medication administration had occurred. On discussion it was established that staff were aware of how this was to be managed.

Safe Sleep:

- Children do not routinely sleep in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire extinguishers were not accessible to the children.
- The fire exit door was not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The two high shelving units in pre-school room 1 were not secured to the wall and if climbed on by a child could potentially fall and cause an injury to the child who was climbing or to the children in the area.

Infection Control:

2. There was no hot water in the sinks in the children's toilets, the water was recorded at 13.4 and 14.3°C, the staff stated the water heater was turned on, but the water temperatures did not increase throughout the morning. Not having warm water for the children to use when washing hands may prevent them from carrying out effective hand washing due to cold water

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Anti-tip furniture anchors have been fitted to each cabinet and secured to the wall. The registered provider has committed on the corrective and preventive action form to ensuring any existing or new high furniture purchased will be fitted with anti-tip anchors.

Infection Control:

2. The service is monitoring the hot water and ensuring there is a supply of hot water in each sink. A plumber is awaited to rectify the problem. While awaiting this the sinks in the pre-school room and the staff toilet have adequate supplies of hot water and these are being used as required. The registered provider has committed to ensuring the hot water will be monitored.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The receipt for the purchase of the anti-tip anchors has been received.

Infection Control:

2. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form are accepted as proof that the hot water is being addressed.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the assurances given the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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) Records available indicated that four staff had up to date training in first aid responder and this ensured that the children attending the service had a person trained in first aid immediately available to them at all times.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that there was suitably equipped first aid supplies available to the children at all times in both care rooms.

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 fire drill records were available and the records indicated that the drills were completed monthly, the last fire drill was completed on 09.10.2023.
- (b) The service records for the firefighting equipment indicated the equipment was serviced in Sept 2023 and the service record for the smoke detection equipment indicated the smoke detectors were last serviced on 19.09.2023.
- (4) The notice for the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency was displayed in the service at the front door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The services insurance record stated the service was insured for 22 pre-school children to attend at any one time and to operate as a part-time service.