

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC252
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Name of Service:	Macroon Family Resource Centre Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Fairfield, Masseytown, Macroon, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12 Y932
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Name of Registered Provider:	Seamus O'Laoire
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	21/03/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	22/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	32
Day 2	AM	41	PM	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440
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Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. M O'Reilly
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Macrooom Family Resource Centre Ltd is a community based early years' service in operation since 2005. The service is registered to cater for children from 0 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional, part time or full day care and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 07:45 am to 6pm each day Monday to Friday.

Macrooom Family Resource Centre Ltd operates from a single storey purpose-built childcare facility located in a residential area in the outskirts of Macrooom town in Co Cork. The four early years' service rooms were in operation at time of inspection. The Butterfly Room caters for children from 0 to 18 months. The Bumble Bee Room caters for children from 18 months to 2 years 6 months. The Tiger Room caters for the children from 2 years 6 months to 3 years 6 months. The room known as the_Monkey and Panda Room in the morning session, the same room is called the Giraffe Room in the afternoon. This room caters for children from 3 to 6 years. There are two designated sleep rooms located beside the Butterfly and Bumble Bee Room. There is a separate designated sleep room for the older children located beside the Tiger and Monkey Panda Room/ Giraffe room. There is a catering kitchen and two kitchenettes, administration office. large reception area, staff room, storerooms, a meeting room and the registered providers office. There are adequate adult and children's toilets and nappy changing facilities and there are two separate outdoor play areas. The children attending the Butterfly and Bumble Bee Room have access to a large spacious covered outdoor space located beside the Butterfly Room. There is ample car parking located to the front and side of the building.

Staffing

At present, there were 22 adults in employment at the early years setting. This includes the registered provider who is service based but not involved in the direct care of the children, ancillary staff, namely two cooks and two in administration, who are not involved in the direct care of the children who attend. Two adults are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. Each of the 17 adults who work with the children holds a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. This includes the childcare manager who assists at staff break times. It excludes two students, who were undertaking a work placement at the time of inspection and two adults who are contracted to provide play activities with one group of children from one playroom for one hour a week, for a period of 6 weeks.

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, childcare manager, deputies, staff and children who were present on both days 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 service had a person in charge and named deputy persons in charge.
 - (b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the premises on both days and remained on duty until the end of the inspection.
 - (c) There is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service.
- (2)
- Twenty-six files were reviewed. This included the registered provider, 17 childcare staff, including the childcare manager and 2 AIM workers. There were 2 students, 2 chefs, 2 administration staff members and 2 adults who are contracted to provide play activities with one group of children for one hour for a period of 6 weeks.
- (a) There were 24 written and validated references on file from past employers.
 - (b) There were 26 written references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 26 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Six police vetting records were available on file for the 6 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) The 17 adults who worked directly with the children all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room on both days of the inspection.

(2)
Day 1

Present were the registered provider, a childcare manager, a chef, two administration staff, 1 student in the morning and 2 students present in the afternoon. There were 11 adults working across the 4 care rooms with 49 children present in the morning session and 32 children present in the evening session. Childcare Manager observed relieving staff at break time in the Butterfly room.

On day 2 of the inspection, during the morning session:

There was the childcare manager, a chef, two administration staff, no student attending in the morning and 10 adults working across the 4 care rooms and one adult available to assist in the Bumble Bee room (deputy) with 41 children present in the morning session. The deputy was assigned to administration work when not assisting in the Bumble Bee room.

During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each care room.

Butterfly Room

There were 6 children present in the morning of the first day of inspection. One child was aged under 12 months and 5 children were aged between 12 and 18 months with 2 adults in attendance.

In the evening there were 4 children present:

One child was aged under 12 months and 3 children were aged between 12 and 18 months with 1 staff in attendance and 1 student. Childcare manager was observed assisting at staff break times.

There were 6 children present in the morning of the second day of inspection. One child was aged under 12 months and 5 children were aged between 12 and 18 months with 2 adults in attendance during the morning session.

Bumble Bee Room

There were 9 children in attendance in the morning of the first day of the inspection Three children were aged less than 2 years and 6 children were aged between 2 years and 2 years 8 months with 2 adults in attendance.

There were 6 children in attendance in the evening. Three children were aged less than 2 years, and 3 children were aged between 2 years and 2 years 8 months with 2 adults in attendance.

There were 6 children present in the morning of the second day of inspection.

There were 6 children in attendance in the morning The 6 children were aged between 2 and 3 years with 1 adult in attendance. The deputy person in charge was there to assist the staff member as required.

Tiger Room

There were 15 children in attendance in the morning of the first day of the inspection.

There were all aged over 2 years 6 months in the morning session with 3 adults in attendance.

There were 10 children aged over 2 years 8 months plus in the evening session with 3 adults in attendance.

There were 12 children present in the morning of the second day of inspection.

There were aged over 2 years 8 months plus in the morning with 3 adults in attendance.

Monkey and Panda Room am session, and the same room is called the Giraffe Room in the afternoon.

There were 19 children Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) in attendance in the morning of the first day of the inspection.

There were all aged over 2 years 8 months with 4 adults in attendance and 1 student.

There were 12 children in attendance the afternoon session aged over three years with 4 adults and 1 student in attendance. Some of the children in attendance in the afternoon session have attended the morning session in the sister service also located in the town of Macroom and are transported by bus that is provided by the service.

There were 17 children present in the morning of the second day of inspection.

The children were aged over three years with 4 adults in attendance.

(8) (a) The service was operated with a minimum of two adults present at all times, as was noted at the time of inspection and through review of the staff roster.

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)(a) to (i)

A sample of 20 of the children's registration forms. were reviewed and found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (g) and (i)

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(i) A weekly staff roster was maintained in the service. There was a separate staff roster record that indicated the staff rostered in each room and the time they went on breaks and who relieved the staff in each room while on their break.

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

- Meals and snacks were served to the children at regular intervals throughout the day. On the inspectors' arrival, some of the children were having a mid-morning snack. A hot lunch meal was provided between 12 and 12.30pm and this was followed by a second snack later at between 2 and 2.30pm in the afternoon.
- Support and assistance offered by the adults during mealtimes was appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children in their care. For example, toddlers had the opportunity to feed themselves, while younger children were provided with one-to-one support. The available cutlery was suitably sized and easily handled by the children. Feeding bibs were also used as required.
- Nappy changing was incorporated into the daily routine at frequent intervals and as the need arose. This care practice was observed to be managed by adults in a caring and sensitive manner.

- As sanitary facilities were provided near the Monkey and Panda/ Giraffe Room the children based in this care room were noted to access and utilise this area independently.
- After the hot lunch meal, a scheduled rest period was accommodated for children who required sleep at this time. To assist the children to relax, adults remained present in the designated sleep rooms until children had settled.
- The adults were responsive to the children's emotional needs, as was observed when upset children were picked up, spoken to in gentle tones and offered reassurance.
- Updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians at drop off and collection times and via the services electronic system.
- A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated through planning and having a variety of play and natural materials available to the children.
- It was observed that all children attending were observed playing in the respective outdoor play areas. The younger children from the Butterfly and Bumble Bee Rooms were observed playing in the large outdoor playroom that had a shock absorbing floor surface. This outdoor play area is completely covered and has wooden side panels allowing the children have outdoor play regardless of the weather.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Food for children's meals and snacks is provided by the service with the exemption of children with additional needs and severe allergies who prefer to have their own snacks.
- A weekly menu plan was in place and a written copy was presented for review. Meals were prepared by a cook, in the onsite kitchen.
- On the days of inspection, the children were offered slices of banana, cucumber, and red peppers with a slice of bread mid-morning on the first day of the inspection and slices of apple, banana, cheese, grapes with a slice of brown bread the second day. A hot meal of sausage sourced from local butcher with mashed potato and beans was served for lunch and on the second day pasta bolognaise.

The mid-afternoon snack was a bowl of homemade soup with a bread roll. Water was available as a drink. Milk was offered as a drink with the mid-afternoon snack.

- Drinking water was accessible to the children within the care rooms outside of allocated mealtimes.

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:

- Entry to the service was possible via the main door and was secure when not in use. This minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises and reduced the likelihood of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was securely enclosed by a combination of walls, fences, and secured gates.
- Low-level electrical sockets within the children's reach were fitted with safety plugs.
- All of the available cleaning agents were stored on high level shelves or secured out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Throughout the service, wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers, for hygienic hand washing and drying.
- Lidded, foot pedal operated bins were available to dispose of used papers towels and suitable bins were also in place for nappy disposal.
- It was observed that tables and chairs were sanitised before and after mealtimes.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to ensure regular physical checks of sleeping children. Corresponding sleep logs were recorded and available for review. Said records documented the checking of each child's breathing, position, and skin colour.
- The air temperature in the designated sleep rooms all fell within the recommended range of 16°C to 20°C, as recommended for safe sleep practice.

- The older pre-school child's rest needs were met during a planned sleeping period when stacking beds were set up in a separate designated sleep room beside the Tiger room and the Monkey and Panda /Giraffe Room There were a sufficient number of stacking beds available with designated suitable bed linen for each child over 2 years who wanted a sleep while attending the service.

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Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- The soft seating in two of the child size couches, one located in the Tiger Room and the other was located in the Monkey and Panda /Giraffe Rooms were cracked and frayed. As the cover on the child sized seating is no longer easy to clean it had the potential risk of cross infection in its present state.

Safe Sleep:

- One of the safety mattresses in the cot located in the Bumble Bee Room sleep room was an incorrect fit.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the written response, the following was stated by the childcare manager:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The two-child size soft seating in poor repair have been removed from the service. Management have stated that regular checks by management and staff will be completed on play equipment and materials and if equipment for the children cannot be repaired, they will be removed and replaced.

Safe Sleep:

- The ill-fitting cot mattress in the Bumble Bee Room sleep room was removed and was replaced with a newly purchased correct fitting mattress. Management and staff will regularly check sleep equipment and bed linen to ensure see they are in a proper state of repair as per safe sleep guidelines

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- The statement from the childcare manager is accepted as evidence.

Safe Sleep:

- Photographic evidence of the newly purchased mattress was submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence and records received were examined and deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23 under Infection Control and Safe Sleep of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

- (c)
- The care rooms were provided with a combination of natural light, through windows and artificial lighting. Adequate lighting was also in place in the sanitary facilities and passageway, as supplied through windows and artificial lighting. Light fittings were noted to have protective covers installed.
 - Openable windows in all the care rooms allowed for a supply of fresh air. Sanitary areas were ventilated naturally through openable windows or by means of mechanical ventilation, or a combination of both.
 - There is an air conditioning unit in place in both the sleep rooms located beside the Butterfly and Bumble Room. It was observed that both the sleep rooms were well ventilated, this assisted in maintaining the sleep room temperature within the recommended normal range between 16°C to 20°C. Air temperatures readings of between 18°C to 19°C was recorded on both days of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- Where the coved floor covering joined the tiled walls was in poor repair. The floor joining located at child height was protruding out and separating from the wall in the two children's toilets adjacent to the Tiger Room.
 - The paint was peeling on the timber door cupboards located under the wash hand basins in the children toilet facility located beside the Tiger Room. The timber door cupboards were not provided with a smooth, durable, easily cleanable surface.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the written response, the following was stated by the childcare manager:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d)

1. Skirting boards were placed over the areas where the floor covering joined the wall tiles in the two children's toilets adjacent to the Tiger Room.
2. The timber door cupboards in poor repair were removed and replaced with new door cupboards located under the wash hand basins in the children toilet facility beside the Tiger Room.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of the new skirting boards in the two children's toilets was submitted and deemed satisfactory.
2. Photographic evidence of the new door cupboards located under the wash hand basins in the children toilet facility beside the Tiger Room was submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Correspondence and records received were examined and deemed to meet the above requirements of Regulation 29 (d) 1+2 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.