

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CE095 |
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| Name of Service: | Majella Nolan |
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| Address of Service: | Ballymaley, Barefield, Ennis, Co. Clare |
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| Eircode: | V95 TC6Y |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Majella Nolan |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 14/11/2023 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 6 | PM | N/A |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E |
| Inspection undertaken by: | A.McCarthy |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Majella Nolan is a privately operated sessional service that was established in 2013. The service operates in an adapted building, adjacent to the owner's home in the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08:40 to 12:10 and accommodates children ranging in age from two to six years. The early years' service comprises of one care room and an outdoor play area is located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

On the 14th of November 2023 the registered provider cared for the six children attending the service. The registered provider had obtained a Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15; 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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*

(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 was the designated person in charge and a person is available in the event of an emergency.

(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge throughout the inspection.

Two files were available and reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Three written references were available from past employers.

(b)

One written reference was obtained from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider and emergency contact person.

(d)

International police vetting was not required. The registered provider and emergency contact person had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The registered held an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification at Level 6 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.

(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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)

The registered provider ensured that the children attending the pre-school service were supervised at all times.

(3)

On the 14th of November 2023 the minimum ratio of adults caring for the children was maintained at all times. The registered provider worked directly with the six children in attendance.

(8)(c)

The service is operated single handedly and an emergency contact is available within close proximity in the event of an emergency.

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)
Enrolment forms were available for the number of children registered in the service. These forms were reviewed and detailed the required particulars outlined in (1) (a)-(i).

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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The registered provider treated the children with positive regard and cared for the children in a kind and respectful manner. This was observed by the registered provider using soft, gentle tones of voice, positive language and offering praise and encouragement. The programme of care and learning was facilitated in a relaxed and calm manner and the activities were guided by the children's personal interests and capabilities. Children were encouraged to be independent with their personal belongings, while having their lunches and drinks and while using the toilet. The children's individual cues for assistance were responded to promptly and in a sensitive manner. Mealtime was observed to be a sociable and an unhurried occasion and the children conversed amicably together.

Physical and Material Environment:

On arrival the children were fully engaged in extended play-based activities, then transitioned to constructive play, sensory play and circle time where the children engaged in colour and counting games, songs and rhymes with actions. During mealtime the registered provider told stories and conversed amicably with the children. To conclude the session the children engaged in extended play in the outdoor area. The children were observed to fully enjoy their time playing chasing games, cycling, engaging in pretend play in the playhouse and construction play. The service operates an open-door policy and the registered provider communicated informally with parents upon the children's arrival and collection from the service.

The indoor and outdoor environment were laid out with areas of interest that offered a space for various types of accessible play and learning activities. Low level tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtime. The areas of interest included a rest and library area. This area was stocked with a range of reading materials and soft furnishings provided a relaxing space for the children. Defined areas of interest included: an art area, a shop and home corner, a dolls house, shelving units with a large range of developmentally appropriate play equipment. The outdoor area offered a large space for the children to play, explore and move freely daily. The outdoor area was well resourced with a large range of play equipment and materials. The outdoor equipment included cars, a balance beam, tricycles, bikes, a playhouse, a slide and a large box with play based equipment and materials.

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 entrance to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering or unsupervised children exiting the building.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded in a logbook.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area located to the rear of the building was adequately secured with hedging, a concrete wall and a gate.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the inspection.
- Running hot water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal bins were available in the sanitary facility to promote good handwashing practices.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider confirmed that medication is not routinely administered by the service. A service policy and documentation are available in the event that medication is required

Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are not undertaken by the service.

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 had a record of up to date First Aid Responde training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible position in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was available for use by an adult in the event of an emergency.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Records were not available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

(b)

An up-to-date record of the number, type and maintenance service for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were not available.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(a)(b)(4)

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

A fire drill was completed. Fire drills will be recorded and carried out on a monthly basis going forward.

(b)

The firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system have been serviced. A copy of the certificate was submitted to the inspectorate. A service will be completed on a yearly basis going forward.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire is now displayed at the entrance to the preschool.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Copy of the fire drill.
- Copy of the service.
- Photograph of the fire action notice.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective actions and supporting evidence the areas of non-compliance are addressed. The regulatory requirement is met under Regulation 26.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for eleven children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.