

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CE103 |
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| Name of Service: | Mountshannon Childcare Centre |
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| Address of Service: | Mountshannon, Mountshannon, Co. Clare |
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| Eircode: | V94 YW95 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Fiona Cahill |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 23/05/2023 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 45 | PM | 39 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, County Clare |
| 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

Mountshannon Childcare Centre is a purpose-built community childcare service located in the village of Mountshannon, County Clare. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care. The service operates Monday to Friday 07:30-18:00. School aged child-care is facilitated in the entrance lobby and the outdoor area at the side of service from 14:00 onwards and during school holidays.

The building accommodates five care rooms, three sleep rooms, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and an outdoor play area at the rear of the service. The five care rooms included: the Baby room (age range: 1-2 years), the Pre-Wobbler room (age range: 1-2.5 years), the Junior room (age range: 2-3 years), the Toddler/Wobbler room (age range: 1.5-2years) and the Senior pre-school room (age range: 3-5 years of age).

Staffing

The manager, twelve members of staff and two relief staff are currently employed by the service. On the 23rd of May 2023 the manager, ten members of staff and an auxiliary staff member who prepares and serves the food were present during the inspection. The staff members held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Records of staff members engagement in continuing professional development were available on the staff files.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 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 manager, 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*

(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)

On the day of the inspection, the manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the manager who is the designated person in charge was available. The staff roster indicated that the designated person or their deputy were always available on site.

The staff files for thirteen members of staff and two relief staff members were reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Twenty-six validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Where past employer references were not available, four references from a source other than a past employer with evidence of verification were available.

(c)

Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available in respect of fifteen members of staff working at the service.

(4)

Fourteen members of staff working in the service held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 or an equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

International police vetting was not available in respect of one member of staff who had lived outside the State for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider provided the following response:

(2)(d)

Corrective and Preventive Action

An application has been made for international police vetting for the staff member in question. The service is currently awaiting the completion. In future, management will ensure that all employment history records are checked, and applications made for International Police vetting before staff commence employment with the creche. A copy of the police clearance certificate will be forwarded to the inspectorate once received by the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Nil

Summary Comment

Based on the response submitted by the registered provider the non-compliance will be addressed upon receipt of the police clearance certificate in August 2023. The area of non-compliance remains outstanding.

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)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)
On the 23rd May 2023 an adequate number of adults supervised the children. Twelve members of staff cared for forty-five children in the morning and thirty-nine children in the afternoon. The manager provided relief cover during breaktime.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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 on the childcare software device for the children attending the service and contained the particulars outlined from (a)-(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:

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

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h)
Details of the children's daily arrival and departure times were recorded on a daily basis on the service's software device.
- (i)
A roster was available outlining the staff members rostered hours and leave taken.
- (k)
Accidents, injuries and incidents were available on the service's childcare application device. These records detailed a parental signature after each incident.

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)

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the staff. The staff treated the children in a kind and caring manner and interacted with the children at their height and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The babies were given an opportunity to lie, roll, crawl and pull themselves up. Children were supervised and supported to be independent with their belongings, while feeding themselves and while using the toilet. The baby's nappy changing requirements were met on an individual need's basis. The staff communicated with children appropriately during this time. Staff recognised the children's individual cues of tiredness and responded to their need for sleep. Children who did not wish to sleep were given the option to play outside or in another area in the service. The children were observed to engage in open ended play, sensory activities, storytelling, singing, rhyming, balancing, chasing and biking games both individually and as part of groups. The children across the five care rooms transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment throughout the day. The infants were taken for a walk in a stroller through the village. Sunscreen was applied and hats were placed on all the children prior to going to the outdoor area. The children attending all the care rooms were seated together and crockery was provided suitable to the children's age and stage of development during mealtime. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and mealtimes were observed to be a relaxed and unhurried occasion.

The care rooms were adequately resourced for the number of children in attendance. The rooms were bright and colourful with the children's individual artwork and creative designs hanging from the ceiling and photographs displayed on the wall. Designated areas of interest with supporting materials were available to the children and babies in each room. A large rest area room was located next to the care room, the children freely moved with their peers between the two rooms and outdoor area on both days of inspection. The care rooms were laid out with designated areas of interest and supporting materials, low level accessible units stored stored age-appropriate toys and play materials and equipment which were readily available for use by the children. Rest areas with couches and soft furnishings were available in each care room.

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 protect the children within by a ked coded pad and a bell operated system.
- Completed risk assessments were available demonstrating the measures taken to reduce the risk of incidents within the service.
- All hazardous equipment and cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was directly accessible to the children from each of the care rooms. This area was safely enclosed by fencing and a surrounding wall.

Infection Control:

- Both the indoor and outdoor environment was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and pedal operated bins.
- The children and adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included before mealtime, after using the toilet and after messy play.
- The nappy changing procedures observed were in accordance with the updated service's nappy changing policy.
- Protective clothing was provided at mealtime to prevent children soiling their clothes.
- The children's soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children's personal belongings and sanitary equipment were stored individually in designated storage areas.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in fridges in the care rooms and the kitchen.

Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the administration of medication policy. Documentation was available for medication administered in the service that detailed signed parental signature prior to and after medication was given to the children.

Safe Sleep:

- Standard cots were available in the three sleep rooms. Sleep beds were available for children aged over two years of age should they require sleep or rest.
- Sleeping children were monitored and a log was maintained on the service's software application device detailing the children's colour, position and breathing.
- Cellular blankets and sleeping bags were observed during the children's sleep periods.
- A thermometer was available to measure the room temperature between 16-20 degrees Celsius.
- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the safe sleep policy.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and passageways were clear from any obstructions.
- Staff had evidence of attending fire safety training on file.

Outing:

- The manager demonstrated a good knowledge to ensure the safe conduct of outings and an outings policy was available to inform practice.

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)
Three adults present in the service had updated First Aid Responder training and the certificates were valid to 15th February 2025. The other members of staff working in the service had up to date paediatric first aid training and the certificates were available for inspection.

(2)(a)
Suitably equipped, first aid boxes were stored in designated areas in each care room.

(b)
First aid boxes were available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(3)(a)(b)

A record book was available at the entrance to the service detailing all visitors to the service.

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)

Records were available demonstrating that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The last completed fire drill took place on the 26th April 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed on the 17th and 26th April 2023.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed in the service demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was provided to the Inspectorate demonstrating adequate insurance cover for fifty-five children attending the service. The insurance cover was valid until the 28th March 2024.