

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN052
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Name of Service:	Shercock Child Resource Centre Ltd
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Address of Service:	Kingscourt Road, Shercock, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	A81 X386
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patrick Lynch
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	12/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Mc Kenna
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Shercock Child Resource Centre Ltd in operation since 2003 is a community run Early Years Service, operating from a purpose built two storey building, located on the outskirts of Shercock town in Co. Cavan. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The service operates from 7.45am to 6pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. A school aged service is also provided. There are two pre-school rooms and one resource/school age room. Other facilities include a kitchen, staff room, office and sanitary facilities. An outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises. Adequate parking is available to the front of the premises.

Staffing

Fourteen staff members are employed in the service. One staff member carries out administrative duties, two staff are on a community employment scheme and eleven staff are employed to work directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 Regulation 9: Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11: Staffing Levels, Regulation 19: Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25: First Aid, Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28: Insurance. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16: Record in relation to Pre-school Service. Inspection 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 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

(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, as far 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 designated person in charge, and a named person in charge who was deputising in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the deputy person in charge and review of the staff roster, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or a named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The staff files for fourteen adults were reviewed.

(a) (b) A total of twenty-two written and validated references were on file.

Four written references were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all fourteen adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history available on file for twelve adults, demonstrated that ten adults had not lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the eleven adults employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification was not required for three adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

- A second reference for two adults was not available.
- Four written references on file were not validated.

(d) The required police vetting for two adults was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b)

A second references for two adults are now on file.

Four written references that were not Validated have now been validated.

Going forward we are now aware that more information is needed when verifying a reference. Any new references will be documented when carrying out the verification process. All Staff folders have been checked to ensure all relevant information is present.

(d)
Police vetting has been received for one member of staff. We are awaiting the second staff members international vetting. We will submit the second vetting when received.

All staff folders have been checked to ensure all relevant documentation is present. Ensure vetting's are correct in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references.

Copy of one police vetting certificate. Copy of an application receipt for the second police vetting application.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (a) (b). The registered provider has partly addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (d). Two police vetting certificates were required to be submitted, one has been submitted and one remains outstanding. This will be reviewed upon the service's next inspection.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:
- Three adults cared for seventeen children aged 3 years 1 month to 3 years 11 months in the Koala Preschool.
Five adults cared for fourteen children aged 4 years 1 months to 4 years 11 months in the Giraffe Preschool.
- (8) (a) A review of the staff roster, demonstrated that there were at least two adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) An employment record for two adults was not unavailable.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff have been asked to update employment records within their CV's and a copy of both have been added to staff files. All staff cv's have been checked and updated as necessary.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of two employment records.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 16 (1) (a).

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrated how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted within the service, with food and drinks consumed on the day of inspection observed to be varied and nutritious. Breakfast cereal is provided each morning, with the mid-morning snack sent in from home by the parents. Snacks eaten by children contained yogurts, a selection of fruits, cheeses, sandwiches, and crackers. A weekly menu of hot meals provided by an external company was available and on display for parents, which is served in the afternoon. A late afternoon snack which varies each day, to include toast/pancakes/waffles/sandwiches/ham/cheese and a selection of fruit is provided. The children were served drinks with each meal and snack. The staff were observed to sit with children at snack times, using it as an opportunity to engage in conversations with the children.

Parental requests regarding children's food intolerance or allergies were listed in the kitchen, informing the staff who prepared snacks and meals of the children's individual dietary needs.

The children were observed to use the toilet independently. The staff remained aware of the children's presence in the sanitary areas and could assist if needed. Children in nappies were changed in line with the child's routine and care needs.

Care was given to children appearances, through the encouragement of children to cleaning their noses. When outdoors, staff provided tissues and a disposal area and continued to encourage and supported children to care for their personal appearance.

Aprons were provided for creative and messy play activities. Spare clothes for each child are stored in the service in the child's own designated cubby/ shelf.

The children in both Preschool rooms experienced a change of environment through availing of outdoor play on several occasions during their day. During these times the children were observed to be dressed appropriately for the cooler weather outdoors on the day of inspection.

Areas of rest to include floor mats, cushions and a soft sofa were available for the children to rest and take time to relax during their day. Stackable bed and bedding were available for children aged over 2 years who may require a sleep during their time in the service.

When small disagreements between children occurred, the staff were observed to promptly support the children by getting down to their level, comfort children where needed and to discuss in age-appropriate ways on how best to solve the problem.

Supporting Relationships

A key worker system is in place, with displays in both Preschool rooms of emerging interests and comments made by the children. These comments and interests are then taken into consideration for the rooms curriculum planning. Learning journals were completed for each child, which included activities during the child's preschool

year. The staff informed the inspector that the learning journals are sent home at the end of each term. This provides opportunities for parents to have a look at what their child had been doing in Preschool and providing children with a sense of pride in their own work and progress in Preschool. Some of the learning journals reviewed contained comments from parents at these intervals. Staff commented that the learning journals are reviewed and discussed with children following their return to the Preschool service, and that the children take immense pride in their learning journals.

The staff in their interactions demonstrated sensitivity and warmth towards the children within their care. The staff were observed to be aware of children's likes and preferences and were observed to encourage children to engage in play, to a level they were comfortable with. The staff also spent time with children on a one-to-one basis when they displayed signs of needing close adult support. During outdoor play the staff were observed to play Christmas songs at the request of the children and take part in silly dances which in turn made the children laugh and giggle.

Communication with parents is in person at arrival and collection times and with the use of a digital application. Interactions were observed between staff and the parents/carers on the day of inspection to include brief updates on how their child had been on that day.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor Preschool rooms were bright and spacious, and provided a range of learning experiences for children. The play equipment and materials were stored at a low level and easily accessible by the children. The rooms were laid out to include designated areas for play such as home corner and role play with dress up, construction areas for building, sensory play to include sand, water and playdough and creative art areas. Tool benches, garages, cars, doll houses, dolls, prams, and small world figurines provided opportunities for imaginary play. Displays on the walls throughout the service included family photos with comments from the children about who was in the photos. An "our community" display had photos of the local buildings in the area, a sensory play activity of snowman art work, finger painting activities and birthday charts were also on display.

The tables and chairs were suitable for the number, age, and stage of development of the children in attendance. Chairs were provided for adults to sit and engage with the children during play activities and snack times.

The outdoor area was secured, pleasant and safe for the use of the preschool children. Soft ground surfacing was provided with two sections of ground surfacing covered in soft bark, and a sheltered area provided play opportunities in the outdoors during inclement weather conditions. A large climbing structure to include a slide and tunnel was available in the outdoor area, during the outdoor play times observed on inspection the children thoroughly enjoyed playing on the wooden structure. A music wall, see saw, rocking toys and a mud kitchen with

play equipment were also provided. Ride on trucks, cars and trikes and push-a-long wheelbarrows were available and observed in use by the children. In addition, a storage shed with additional outdoor play materials was available.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- The main entrance to the service which prevents unauthorised access to the service.
- was secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival.
- A visitor log was maintained which the inspector was requested to 'sign in' upon arrival.
- The garden area was secured with high level fencing and secured gates. There were no hazards observed in the outdoor area.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised during the inspection.
- The toys and equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas, available for the children's use were observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Daily risk assessment records were maintained, with records reviewed kept up to date.
- The kitchen remained inaccessible to the children, with the door locked when not in use.
- Floor coverings in the indoor rooms, outdoor play areas and on the stairs were maintained in a good state of repair.
- Storage areas were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper towels were provided in sanitary areas for handwashing. The children in the Giraffe Preschool were observed to wash their hands before snack time.
- The tables were cleaned by staff in both Preschool rooms prior to snack time.
- The sanitary areas were ventilated through means of openable windows.

- Children snacks taken in from home were stored in fridges within the care rooms.
- Cleaning schedules were available, with records maintained up to date. The service was maintained in a clean manner throughout.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. During nappy changing procedures in the Koala Preschool room, the following infection control, and cross contamination risks were observed.
 - Nappy changing was carried out in the resource room. This area is not suitable for nappy changing practises as the area is used in the afternoon by school aged children, and there were no nappy waste facilities or handwashing facilities available to the child or adult in this room. Soiled nappies were taken into the care room and disposed of in a waste bin within the care room.
 - No aprons were observed to be worn during nappy changing procedures observed, which conflicts with the services nappy changing policy.
 - Handwashing by adults or the children, was not carried out following nappy changing procedures.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

New nappy bins added to bathroom area for nappy changing purposes. Policy adapted to include nappy changing bins. Visual posters added to changing areas for daily reminder. Staff received a copy of amended policy to familiarise themselves with.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of purchase of nappy bin, posters in place and copy of updated policy.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) evidenced by in date certificates on file for six staff.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

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) A record of fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill recorded on 29/11/2024.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated November 2024, and the smoke alarms service record was dated May 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure 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

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 66 pre-school children attending the service on a Full-Time basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School