

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN061		
Name of Service:	The Denn Toddlers Playgroup Clg		
Address of Service:	The Resource Centre, Loonogs, Crosskeys, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	H12 X2K5		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Cobey		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	06/12/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader		
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

The Denn Toddlers Playgroup CLG has been operating as a community-based childcare service since 2000. The service provides a sessional service to pre-school children aged 3 – 6 years. The service operates one session from 9am – 12pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 20 preschool children.

The service is conducted from the local resource centre located in a rural setting of Crosskeys Co. Cavan. The service currently has 1 care room and sanitary facilities off the room. There is an outdoor area to the front of the building.

Staffing

There were 4 staff in the service, including the service manager employed to work directly with the children.

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 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)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived at the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

There were 4 staff files presented for inspection.

(2)(a)&(b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 1 member of staff.

There were 2 written references for 3 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 4 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(2)(d) Following a review of the staff files presented and available on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that all 4 members of staff who worked directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)&(b) Six staff references were not validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)&(b) All 6 staff references have been validated, signed and dated by a committee member.

All references will be signed and dated for validation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of validated references x 6.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.

(3) When the inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection, the adult to child ratios were correct.

The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection:

- In the Preschool Room there were 17 children aged between 3 – 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.

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 following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children had free movement in the care room.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting and supervision provided. Although not observed in use on the day nappy changing

facilities were available for those children who required a nappy changed in the disability access toilet across the main hall.

- Lunches were brought in by the children which consisted of fruit, yoghurts, crackers, pancakes, cheese and the children had access to their drinks at lunchtime. Assistance was given to children to open food stuffs. The children were afforded plenty of time to finish their food.
- Independence was promoted by encouraging the children to go out to the hall and get their lunches and return their bags afterwards.

Supporting relationship around children

- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. The staff also confirmed that a notice board was placed outside or in the hall for the parents to see what activities the children were doing during the week. In addition, a phone messaging group was also in use.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff members for example *“good boy”* *“ah sure your only learning I’ll show you”* or *“sure your only little”*. Staff showed great familiarity with the children and their families as evidenced by the conversations they engaged in with the children.
- Any minor behavioural issues or disagreements were dealt with swiftly and not allowed to escalate.
- The service had systems in place to assist children who required additional supports.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. There were boxes with supporting toys and equipment for a variety of interest areas which included blocks, small world figures, push toys, musical instruments, wooden toys, dolls and dolls house. There was a home corner, dress-up clothing with a mirror for role play, art supplies and a painting station on top of the sand tray, small world items, a kitchen, dolls house and books. Sensorial play was facilitated with sand and water trays.

Programme Of Activities.

- A daily schedule was on display in the room.

- A large clip with a selection of each child’s artwork was on display which included seasonal themed Christmas collage work.
- A “My Learning Journal” had been commenced for each child which contained artwork from the year so far and some observations/entries into it have commenced.
- Transitions between activities and care practices were smooth.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There was no soft comfortable area in the room for a child to go to sit and take a break from activities or rest in should they so wish.
2. The children did not have access to their drinks throughout the morning as they were stored in their bags in the hall and only brought out at lunchtime.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. There is a mat and cushions in place in the care room. The registered provider is currently working with an outside agency and the physical indoor environment is being worked on and that includes a cosy corner area being developed. This will always be in place.
2. A water station area has been put in place.

The water station will remain an accessible area in the classroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the registered provider’s response. The non-compliances have been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised. Unauthorised persons are restricted from gaining access to the premises, with the entrance doors leading into the premises secured by a 'buzzer system'.
- Staff handbags and cleaning sprays were stored up high out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tabletops were cleaned after messy play and before lunchtime.
- The children washed their hands after messy play and before lunch with supervision provided.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not 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:

General Safety:

1. The blind cords on the 2 windows to the front of the building were not secured and are a health and safety risk.

Infection Control:

2. There were 3 cloth towels at the sink in the care room which staff reported were used to dry their hands. The use of cloth towels for hand drying is a cross contamination and an infection control risk.
3. The service mop and bucket were inappropriately stored in the lobby of the sanitary accommodation off the room and accessible to the children.
4. The lunches were stored in the children's bags in the hallway and not in the fridge which permits the growth of food poisoning bacteria.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Both blind cords are now secured and safe.
Management and staff will keep regular checks on the blind cords and security.

Infection Control:

- All cloth towels have been removed from the ECCE room. Paper towels are now used for hand drying.
Cloth towels are not allowed in the ECCE room for hand drying.
- Service mop and bucket are safely stored back in the store room away from the children.
Service mop and bucket will safely be stored in the store room away from the children and if required during the session will be left back to store room immediately after use.
- All lunches are placed in the fridge when the children arrive every morning.
Children and staff will automatically take the lunches out of bags upon arrival to the service and place them into the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting documentation was reviewed by the Inspectorate. The non-compliances identified in Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

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) On review of the documentation and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates, there were 2 FAR certificates available and a person trained with FAR was available at all times.

(2)(a) and (b) There was a first aid box available in the service which was accessible to the children at all times.

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 was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service, the last recorded 27/11/24.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment dated 10/9/24 and 10/11/24 respectively.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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,*

Non-Compliance Information

(c) Three of the 8 ceiling lights in the room were not working and therefore the lighting in the room was poor and not conducive for carrying out tabletop activities in the room.

(d) The long plastic covered benches at the door were in disrepair as the corners were worn and this does not allow for effective cleaning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) All lights in the ECCE room have been replaced by the resource centre committee.

Lights to be replaced immediately when required.

(d) The long plastic covered benches have been removed from the room.

Management and Staff will keep an eye on the overall wear and tear of furniture and equipment in the ECCE room going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The Inspectorate is satisfied that the non-compliances have been addressed.