

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL035		
Name of Service:	Donagh Creche Ltd		
Address of Service:	Mullins, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F93 FE04		
Name of Registered Provider:	Stella Farren		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	20/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94		
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo		
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		

Description of service

Donagh Creche Ltd. is a privately operated part-time day care service situated on the outskirts of Carndonagh town on the Inishowen peninsula of county Donegal. The service is registered to cater for children aged 1 - 6 years. The hours of operation are from 9:00hrs to 13.55hrs. A sessional service is available from 9:00hrs to 12:00hrs. The premises consists of a detached, split level, former domestic dwelling that has been substantially upgraded to provide the early years facility. On the upper floor there are two care rooms, and a kitchen area, with a newly converted large attic storage space and office. On the lower level there are two further care rooms with a second kitchen area, and a sleep room off one of the care rooms. Three separate outdoor play areas are provided on the premises including a sensory garden and a large, covered area to protect children from the elements.

Staffing

There were ten adults present on the day of inspection, including the manager, who was available to staff in a supernumerary capacity throughout the day of inspection. The registered provider was not present in the service on the day of inspection but was available if required.

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 the following: Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment, Regulation 11 - Staffing levels, Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child, Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, Regulation 25 - First aid, and Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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, 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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
 - (c) There was 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.
- (2) On the day of inspection, it was confirmed with the designated person in charge that the vetting files for four adults had not been previously reviewed. Three adults were employed to work directly with the children, and one adult was a student on placement.
- The following vetting information was available for four adults:
- (a) Five written validated references from past employers for four of the adults.
 - (b) Three written validated references from reputable sources for three of the adults.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for four adults.
- (4) Three of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. When the inspector arrived unannounced, there were 9 staff members working directly with 54 children. The person in charge was also available to the staff as and when required.

(2) The registered provider ensured that on the day of inspection, the adult to child ratio was always maintained at the minimum specified ratios.

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.*

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

Compliance Information

(1) On day one of the inspection, a sample of 14 children's registration forms were reviewed. There was a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these children.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service was present.
- (d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian 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 where the family has registered with a general practice.
- (h) Record of each child's immunisation.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(2) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing (1) (a), (d), (e) and (f) above.

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

(1) (a) The children's learning, development and well-being was observed to be facilitated on the day of inspection.

- The care rooms were laid out with well-defined areas of interest. Children were free to choose their own activities. The materials supplied in the rooms were age and stage appropriate for the children in each of the care rooms.
- The service promoted healthy eating. Food and snacks were provided by parents. The service was able to facilitate the warming of food for children if required. Lunch boxes were stored in the fridge on arrival and brought to the rooms in a large basket for mealtimes. Children retrieved lunch boxes and drinks independently, from the basket. Children discussed freely what they each had in their boxes on the day. Mealtime was observed to be a very social occasion between all children and staff. Once finished, children were observed to clean up independently, placing items in the bins provided and returning their lunch boxes to the basket, to be returned to the fridge for later in the day.
- Sensory opportunities were available to the children through arts, crafts, nature tables, and sand and water area in the rooms. Further sensory opportunities were available outdoors in a designated sensory garden. On the day of inspection children were observed to be engaged in sensory play using homemade dough which had followed on from the previous day's activity of making and cooking apple pies. Children were later observed to eat their own individual pies, which they were able to identify themselves from the shape they had placed on top of the pies, a bat, a pumpkin etc.
- Children were afforded the opportunity to play outside. It was evident that children played outside in all-weather types. On the day of inspection, it was raining, and children were dressed appropriately. A sheltered area was also available.

- Children were observed to jump in puddles and use the outdoor play equipment that was provided. Staff were observed to interact well with the children and join in a game of hide and seek in the sensory garden, hiding behind the trees and benches, as well as in the playhouse.
 - A key-worker system was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for supporting relationships with designated children and their parents. Daily communication between staff and parents was recorded and highlighted to appropriate staff members.
 - Childrens folders contained learning stories for parents to be kept informed of their child’s development. Mark making and artwork contained in the folders had a written description by staff to demonstrate to parents what the child had drawn and said about their own artwork.
 - Short, medium, and long-term curriculum plans that were displayed and documented on the notice board were evident in the children’s folders and from art displays within the care rooms.
 - Childrens artwork was displayed at child level throughout the service, and in photo frames that were placed on low level windowsills.
 - There were individual care plans in place for children who required them. A list of likes and dislikes for all children were available to staff for them to familiarise themselves with.
 - The use of picture exchange cards was observed during times of transition with children who needed additional support, ensuring a less stressful time for the child.
- (b) The inspector observed appropriate care practices during the inspection.
- Staff were observed to sit with children throughout the day and engaged in child led conversation and activities. Staff were also observed to sit and chat with children during mealtimes.
 - Staff interacted very well with the children in a respectful, and sensitive manner throughout the day. Verbal and non-verbal interactions were carried out by staff, using low tones and down at the child’s level, labelling for children, and using open ended questions in their discussion.
 - During nappy changing the staff members spoke and interacted positively with each of the children, whilst labelling the stages of the changes for the child. Children were handled in a sensitive and kind manner.
 - Children of toileting age were encouraged to be independent. They were supervised and helped if required.

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 front entrance door to the premises was found to be locked and secured upon arrival to the service, preventing unauthorised exit or entry. The rear entrance door to the premises was also locked and secured.
- Internal door handles were positioned up high to prevent children from opening them.
- The outside garden areas were fenced and gated. The gates were secured whilst children were outside.
- Play materials and equipment appeared in good order throughout the premises.
- Grapes in children's lunch boxes were observed to be cut in half to reduce the risk of choking.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.
- The hot water provided at the children's wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature below 43°C for hand washing.

Infection Control:

- The premises was observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Tables and sanitary areas were observed to be cleaned regularly by staff.
- Foot pedal bins were observed throughout the premises.
- Children's hands were routinely washed, before snack and after toileting. Staff assisted the children when necessary. Child friendly handwashing posters were observed beside the sinks.
- Nappy changing mats were observed to be cleaned between use.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff confirmed if unwell, children are collected after a phone call home to parents. Medication is only given if required and with permission from parents first. Febrile reducing medication is kept in the fridge onsite.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed on the day of inspection to ensure safe evacuation in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- Evidence of regular fire drills was displayed on the notice board.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following was observed on the day of inspection and could lead to a risk of injury to a child.

1. A drawer on the base of the wooden play kitchen in preschool room one was split and could cause a pinch or splinter injury to a child.

Infection Control:

The following was observed on the day of inspection and could lead to a risk of cross infection.

1. Children were observed to lift the lid of the bin with their hands to place paper towels in after they had cleaned and washed their hands.
2. Childrens hands were not observed to be washed after nappy changing. Staff were observed not to remove gloves or apron prior to placing on a clean nappy and redressing children.
3. A staff member was observed not to remove gloves between attending to two different children in the sanitary area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The drawer was removed immediately from the Wooden Play Kitchen.

The drawer has been fixed with a new piece of wood and the area has been sanded down to provide a smooth surface. The Wooden Play Kitchen will be inspected regularly by staff to observe any damage that may cause injury.

Infection Control:

2. Support and encourage children to operate the bin using the foot pedal only. Staff can model this action for the younger Toddlers aged 1-2 years. If applicable, provide an open lid bin for hand towel use only.
3. Meet with all staff to highlight the amended nappy changing procedure to include a mid-way change of gloves/handwashing prior to placing on a clean nappy and redressing the child. Edit the Nappy change Policy to include the midway change of gloves / handwashing of staff with children who require cream to be applied or have a soiled nappy. Display amended Nappy Changing Policy in the bathroom.
 - Enter the bathroom with the child and gather the items required. Nappy, wipes/cotton wool, apron, gloves, creams/powders (if applicable)
 - Wash staff hand and apply disposable gloves and apron.
 - Place the child on the change mat.

- Proceed to remove the child's nappy and clean appropriately.
 - Place used nappy into the appropriate disposable nappy bag/bin. If the child's nappy is soiled or the child requires an application of cream, disposable apron and gloves will be removed and disposed of in a disposable nappy sack/bin.
 - Staff will wash their own hands / apply new gloves.
 - Apply clean nappy to the child and redress.
 - Remove child from the change mat.
 - Staff will remove gloves and wash their hands before providing assistance to the child in hand washing practices.
 - Staff will spray and disinfect the mat/ changing area.
 - Handwash for staff.
 - Child and staff return to the Care Room
4. Remind staff to attend to the needs of one child at a time in the bathroom. Hold a staff meeting to highlight the need to reduce the risks of infection control. Encourage the children to be independent when retrieving handtowels and placing them in the bin.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. None submitted.
3. Updated Nappy Changing procedure submitted.
4. None submitted.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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

The registered provider ensured that;

(1) at all times, there was a person trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children always attending the service.

(2) (a) (b).

The first aid equipment was readily available and safely stored in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service had a certificate of insurance valid until the 27th of March 2024 showing that adequate insurance cover was in place for the service's maximum number of 64 children.