

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL042
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Name of Service:	Fairytales Day Care Ltd
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Address of Service:	Drumbern, Milford, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 RK72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patrice McBride
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan & L Costello
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Fairytales Daycare Ltd is a privately owned and operated service located in a rural area close to the town of Milford, Co. Donegal. The service provides both full day care and sessional preschool to children aged 0-6 years and operates from 07.45-18:00 each weekday. There are two sessional services in operation within the service, one from 09.00-12.00 and the second from 09.15-12.15 The service operates from two detached buildings on the ground of the registered providers dwelling house. The first building is a purpose-built dormer style detached building containing two care rooms, a dining room, sanitary facilities and a kitchen. One care room is on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The second building consists of one care room and sanitary facilities in a detached purpose-built single-story unit. Meals and snacks for children are prepared on-site in a designated kitchen. There are two outdoor areas including one large outdoor play area which the older children share access to and a second partially covered area to the rear of the premises was designated for use by the younger children.

Staffing

There are a total of fifteen staff members employed to work in the service. There are eleven adults employed to work directly with the children, one of whom is funded through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and 4 staff members employed to carry out duties such as cooking, maintenance, administration and grounds caretaking duties. One student from a third level degree programme was also present. The registered provider is on the premises on a daily basis and is available to provide relief cover in the care rooms when 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 may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 26. 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 inspectors wish 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,

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of all sixteen adults in the service were reviewed.

Twenty- eight written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all sixteen adults employed in the service.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for all sixteen adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early years regulatory notice requiring all vetting to be renewed every three years.

(d)

International police vetting certification was available for the two adults employed in the service that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)
Eleven adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)
Four written and validated reference were not available for three adults in the service who had previous past employment.

(d)
It could not be determined if one adult required international police vetting as no history of employment was available for the adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

(2) (a) (b)
All references have now been verified and validated. The office will ensure all references going forward are verified and validated. Evidence of attempts to source reference from past employers will remain on file.

(d)
History of employment submitted to inspectorate on the 26/02/2025; no international police vetting required.

Supporting documentation submitted

(a) (b) Two references submitted and letters confirming no past employer.
(d) curriculum vitae submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliances found on inspection and this will be reviewed on 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.

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of staff members working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (2) On the day of the inspection the minimum adult to child ratios were maintained.

On the morning of the inspection, 39 children were being cared for by seven staff in three care rooms.

- In the Ladybirds room, two staff were caring for seven children aged between 1-2 years, all who were attending on a full-time basis.
- In the Little Footprints room, two staff were caring for 13 children between the ages of 2 years 6 months- 5 years. Four of the children were attending on a sessional basis.
- In the Tiny Giants room, three staff were caring for 19 children aged between 2 years – 4.5 years. 6 of children were attending on a sessional basis.

In the afternoon, there were 29 children being cared for by seven staff in 3 care rooms.

- In the Ladybirds room, two staff were caring for seven children, between the ages of 1-2 years, all who were attending on a full-time basis.
- In the Little Footprints room, two staff were caring for nine children between the ages of 2 years 6 months- 5 years, all of whom were attending on a full-time basis.
- In the Tiny Giants room, three staff were caring for 13 children aged between 2 years – 4.5 years all of whom attending on a full-time basis.

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)

Staff members were observed to interact with the children in a warm, positive and supportive manner. Children's needs were responded to promptly by staff who demonstrated great familiarity with the children's, interests and stages of development. Staff were very clear on their roles within the service and collaborated well to ensure the efficient running of the service.

The service uses a software technology application to communicate with parents in relation to the children's eating, sleeping and toileting needs throughout the day. Parents can communicate with staff through the app with staff confirming that pick up and drop off times are used to communicate further with parents.

The care rooms were laid out with defined areas of interest. In the Little footprints room, a toy shop area was set up a food items, baskets and a cash register. In the dramatic area, a circus items such as with a big top tent, drums, circus posters and dress up items were provided for children's imaginative play. In Little Ladybirds toddler room, children were engaged in a modelling dough activity using various shape cutters to promote fine motor development. Equipment and toys were arranged neatly in boxes on low level shelving and were readily available to the children in the room.

Tiny giants is located in a standalone building on the grounds of the service with its own sanitary accommodation and direct access to the large outdoor area. This large outdoor area is a shared space for the older children and provides opportunity for gross motor skill development and creative play. Swings, slides and a tree house are provided where children take turns utilising these resources. A large sand play area allows for construction and imaginative play. The preschool children were observed running up and down the hills and playing with various activities while been supervised by the adults. The tiny giant's room is equipped with numerous resources to aid the development of the preschool child. These include puzzles and jigsaws, arts and crafts. Home corners with kitchens and dress up areas, construction areas with trucks, cars and tracks. A library equipped with a variety of books allow for language development.

The children were observed to be happy in their environment, playing individually and in groups. Kind interactions were observed with the staff members and children and the children appeared to be content in the company of the staff members providing direct care.

(1) (b)

Meals and snacks are prepared on site and provided to the children attending full day care. Meals are provided at regular intervals with Breakfast, mid-morning snack, dinner, which was a hot meal and an afternoon snack. On the day of the inspection, the food provided was found to be adequate and nutritious to the needs of young children. The texture of the food was appropriate for the children attending and alternatives were available if a child refused the hot meal for any reason.

Children attending for a sessional service brought food from home which contained sandwiches, yogurts and fruit. All perishable items were stored in the fridge in the rooms. Drinking water was available to children throughout the day.

Mealtimes were observed to be a happy, relaxed occasion and staff sat with the children to engage in social conversation, providing support when required.

Nappy changing was carried out on a scheduled basis and more frequently when required. Nappy changing was used as a time for warm, one to one interaction with the children. Children's hand hygiene, personal care, and respiratory hygiene was attended to promptly. Bibs were observed to be used in the toddler room and were changed frequently. Children were observed to use the toilet independently, with staff providing support where needed.

Children in the toddler room were placed to sleep in a separate sleep room. This room contained six wooden cots and stackable floor beds for older children. In each of the care rooms, a soft, cosy area with matting, cushions and canopies provided a quiet area for children to rest if needed.

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:

1. The entrance to the service was secure upon the inspector's arrival. Entrance to the building was accessed through a keypad or calling the doorbell.
2. Internal doors were secured to prevent a child exiting unsupervised.
3. The kitchen was inaccessible to children at all times during the inspection.
4. Blind cords were secured with restrictors
5. Windows that were accessible to children were fitted with opening restrictors
6. Highchairs were fitted with safety harnesses.
7. Storage and utility rooms were inaccessible to children.
8. The outdoor area was secured by fencing and electric gates to prevent a child leaving unsupervised or unauthorised entry by an adult.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, soap and hand towels were provided to children and staff for handwashing. Children and staff were observed washing their hands regularly throughout the inspection prior to meal and snack times and after using the toilet and messy play.
- The care rooms were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Ventilation was provided thorough means of openable windows and wall vents.
- Lidded, foot operated pedal bins were used throughout the service.

Administration of Medication:

- No medicine was administered on the day of inspection however staff informed the inspector of the procedure to be followed in the event of a child requiring medication.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room temperature was maintained through a wall thermostat. On the day of the inspection the temperature measured 16.4°C which is within the permitted temperature range of 16-20°C for safe sleep.

- Sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes and the breathing pattern, colour and position of the child was recorded. The temperature of the sleep room at the time of the check was recorded.

Fire Safety:

9. Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the 'Little footprints' room and 'Tiny giants' room, temperature reducing medicines were stored in fridge that was unlocked therefore accessible to children.

Infection Control:

2. In the sleep room, mattresses were not fitted with waterproof covers as required to ensure infection control.
3. Hand hygiene was observed not to be carried out routinely in the Little ladybirds room after nappy changing posing a risk of infection control.

Safe Sleep:

4. In the toddler room, a young child under the age of two, was asleep on a floor mat and sheet with a pillow and blankets. It is acknowledged by the inspectors that the registered provider was taking steps to familiarise the child with the sleep routines and requirements in the service and a risk assessment was carried out. However, it is a requirement that children under the age of 2 are placed to sleep on an acceptable sleep facility as outlined in Tusla's "Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months".

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

1. All medicines have been removed from care rooms and placed in the kitchen fridge. Suitable locks have been ordered and will be fitted onto fridges.

Infection Control:

2. Waterproof mattress covers have been ordered for each cot. All cots will have a waterproof mattress cover going forward.
3. Discussion with staff team has been carried out and all steps of hand hygiene have been reviewed. All staff team have reviewed the policies and procedures on hygiene protocol

Safe Sleep:

- Immediately after the inspection, a discussion with a parent was carried out in relation to moving a child to a safe bed.

Said child is now sleeping safely and contently on the floor bed in same area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographs of medication in kitchen fridge submitted. Invoice for fridge locks submitted on the 14.02.25.

Infection Control:

- Invoice for waterproof protectors submitted on the 14.02.25.
- Minutes of team meeting submitted on the 14.02.25.

Safe Sleep:

- Picture of stackable floor bed submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliances found on inspection and this will be reviewed on 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) The registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in FAR on the premises at all times.

(2)(a) First aid boxes were easily accessed by staff and stored in a conspicuous position on the premises.

(2)(b) The first aid boxes were adequately stocked for the number of children on the premises and were available to the children if required.

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.

Compliance Information

1 (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms located in the service. Firefighting equipment was last serviced in June 2024 and the service had a written record confirming that the fire alarm system was serviced and tested in October 2024.

Non-Compliance Information

1 (a) Records showed the last fire drill took place in March 2024. The registered provider confirmed that no fire drills had taken place since this date. Regular (monthly) fire drills are required to ensure staff and children are familiar with evacuation procedures.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

A fire drill was carried out on Wednesday 20th November and again on Tuesday 17th December. Routine fire drills will be carried out each month going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of fire drills submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to regulation 26. This regulation is now compliant.