

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DL139

Name of Service: The Model Creche Ltd.

Address of Service: Drumnahoe, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Eircode: F92 FH51

Name of Registered Provider: Pauline Doherty

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 26/05/2023

No of pre-school children: AM 77 PM 49

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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

The Model creche is a privately owned and operated pre-school service located on the outskirts of Letterkenny town offering a full day care, part-time and sessional pre-school service to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service's operating hours are from 7.45am to 6.00pm with a sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00md, Monday to Friday. The service is also registered to provide school age care.

The pre-school operates from a purpose-adapted two-story premises with seven care rooms. There are four rooms on the ground floor and three on the first floor. A kitchen, office and storage facilities are also located on the ground floor. Children's sanitary accommodation is provided adjacent to each playroom. An outdoor play area which has been sub-divided for use by different groups of children is located to the rear and both sides of the building.

Staffing

In total, 26 staff members were employed to work in the service. This included a service manager, two members of kitchen staff and 23 staff members employed to work directly with pre-school children. The registered provider did not work in the service on a day-to-day basis. The service manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person to deputise as required. Each staff member working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 23, 25, 26, 28 and 29. 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 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, 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 named designated person in charge and three named persons to deputise in the event of their absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service and remained in the service throughout the inspection. A review of the staff roster evidenced that the designated person in charge or one of the named deputies were available at all times when the service was in operation.
- (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4) A review of the staff roster indicated that there have been no new staff members recruited in the service since the last inspection. This was confirmed by the person in charge. The employment

records for all exiting staff members were reviewed on previous inspections and found to meet the requirements of the regulation.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service throughout the period of the inspection.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the minimum adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. On the inspector's arrival to the service, there were 17 adults working directly with 77 pre-school children across seven rooms.
 - In the baby room, 4 staff members were caring for 12 children attending on a full-time basis. There were 2 children aged 0-1 year and 10 were aged 1-2 years.
 - In the toddler room, 3 staff members were caring 10 children aged 2-3 years attending on a full time basis.
 - In the junior preschool room, 2 staff were caring for 6 children aged 3-4 years who were all attending on sessional basis.
 - In preschool 1, 3 staff members were caring for 13 children aged 3-5 years. There were 5 children attending on a sessional basis and the remaining 8 children attended on a full or part time basis.
 - In preschool 2, 17 children were being cared for by 2 staff members. There were 14 children attending on a full or part time basis and the remaining 3 attending on a sessional basis.
 - In preschool 3, there were 2 staff members caring for 10 children aged 3-5 years all of which attended on a sessional basis.

- In preschool 4, there was one staff member caring for 9 children aged 3-5 years, 8 of which attended on a sessional basis and 1 on a part time basis.

In the afternoon, five of the pre-school rooms were in operation and there were 12 adults working directly with 49 pre-school children.

- In the baby room, 3 staff members were caring for 12 children aged 0-1 year and 1-2 years.
- In the toddler room, 2 staff members were caring 10 children aged 2-3 years.
- In preschool 1, 2 staff members were caring for 11 children aged 3-5 years.
- In preschool 2, 15 children aged 3-5 years were being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In preschool 4, there was 1 staff member caring for 1 child aged 3 years.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults present at all times during the unannounced inspection. A sample of attendance records and staff rosters reviewed showed that at least two adults were present in the service at all times.

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:

- There were two entrance doors to the front of the premises, both of which were secured on the inspector's arrival to the service and remained secured throughout the inspection preventing children from leaving the building unnoticed and unauthorised persons from accessing the building.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning products were stored in high shelving out of the reach of children or in locked cupboards with safety restrictors.
- Toys and play equipment were observed to be clean and in a good state of repair.
- Blind cords were secured with appropriate securing devices.
- The stairs were well maintained with no trip hazards evident. Children were supervised at all times when using the stairs.
- Each of the highchairs used in the baby room were equipped with a safety harness.
- A risk assessment was carried out in the care rooms each day and documentation was available to evidence they had been completed up to date.
- High rise equipment in the outdoor area was well maintained, secured and positioned on an impact absorbent surface.
- The surface temperature of the radiators in all occupied rooms were measured within safe limits.

Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing facilities were provided in the service with thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Lidded, foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The care rooms and sanitary accommodation were ventilated by either openable windows or mechanical ventilation systems. Windows were observed to be left ajar or opened for periods during the day. Children

in the preschool rooms were observed to have access to outdoor play on the day of inspection for sustained periods of time.

- Aprons and gloves were available to staff for nappy changing procedures. Individually labelled facecloths were provided in the baby room to clean children's face after eating.
- The premises and play equipment appeared to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. On the day of inspection, staff members were observed cleaning tables and chairs after meals and prior to children eating. Nappy changing areas were cleaned after each use and sanitary accommodation was observed to be visibly clean. A review of the cleaning records detailed appropriate measures were taken to clean and disinfect the service with records maintained up to date.
- Children's belongings including spare clothes were stored in individually labelled bags, soothers and bottles used in service were individual to each child.
- Refrigerators were provided for storage of perishable food items in the care rooms and a record was observed in the baby room of a temperature check carried out three times each day.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored in a secure cabinet in the office out of children's reach. A sample review of records demonstrated that consent is received from parents prior to medication being administered to children and at the time of administration, two staff members are present.

Safe Sleep:

- Children attending the baby room were placed to sleep in the designated sleep room or in one of the two additional cots that were provided in a small area off the main care room. Each cot was clearly labelled and assigned to individual children with a supply of clean bed linen available for use. Physical checks at intervals no more than 10 minutes were carried out and documented by staff. One staff member remained in the sleep room with children during the designated rest period. Older children in the toddler room were placed to sleep in an unused care room on stackable beds. Each of the beds were equipped with appropriate bed linen.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit routes were free from obstruction during the inspection and a notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency evacuation was on displayed in the care rooms and in communal areas.

Outing:

- The service had a policy on outings and consent was given by the parents prior to any outings taking place. Staff were familiar of the procedure to follow in preparation for and while on an outing as per the services policy including carrying out a risk assessment of the location prior to the outing taking place.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The mechanism for opening the gate to one of the outdoor play areas was on the outside which was accessible from the entry point to the building therefore posing a risk of unauthorised entry.

Administration of Medication:

- It is acknowledged that written consent was provided by parents prior to the administration of medication. However, individual records of medication administered to children were not signed by the parents on collection from the service which poses a risk that a parent may unintentionally administer additional doses of medication outside of the maximum safe limits.

Safe Sleep:

- The air temperature in the baby room at the time children slept in the room was recorded at 21.2°C which is outside of the safe range of 16-20°C.
- One of the two cots located within the baby room was positioned beside a radiator. Cots are required to be positioned away from hazards.
- There was no evidence available to demonstrate that five of the cot mattresses in the baby sleep room had met the required safety standard.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The service has purchased a coded lock to secure the gate. This use of this lock will impede any visitors from accessing the playground. The staff will all know the code the same as the keypad entry at main doors.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication form has been edited to include signature of parent to confirm they acknowledge the medication was given, volume and time. This will ensure the parent must sign upon collection of the child as well as giving prior permission for the administration of medication at each and every occurrence.

Safe Sleep:

3. The heat going to the room has been reduced. An air conditioning unit was purchased which can be used in this space for further heat reduction. Staff have been reminded that the lower sleep temperature of 16 – 20°C applies in this area when children sleep and not the playroom limits of 18-22°C. The use of the air conditioning unit along with ventilation will further ensure the heat will be maintained at 16-20°C.
4. The radiator nearest to the cot has been turned off. Additionally, the cot has been repositioned 50cm away from the radiator and the other cot.
5. The mattresses have been replaced with new mattresses that meet the required safety standard.

Supporting documentation submitted

A number of images, documents and purchase receipts were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed and deemed to meet the requirements of the regulation.

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)
A sample review of staff records demonstrated that a minimum of 10 staff members had up to date training in first aid for children. The staff roster demonstrated that at least one of these staff members was available to the children at all times.

(2) (a) and (b)

There were five stocked first aid boxes in the service located in communal areas which were easily accessible from all care rooms. Each room also had a small supply of regularly required items for use when necessary.

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 written record of fire drills carried out in the service was maintained. The record indicated that fire drills occur monthly with the most recent dated 11th May 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. The most recent maintenance record for the firefighting equipment was dated August 2022 and the smoke alarms was dated April 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire was displayed in all care rooms and lobby areas.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available to view which demonstrated that the service was insured to provide a full day care service for up to 107 children with an expiry date of 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building was constructed using concrete blocks and on superficial visual inspection, there were no obvious defects or evidence that the stability or structure of the building was compromised.
- (b) Entry to the building was controlled internally via an electronic bell system. Both doors to the front of the building were secure on the inspector's arrival and remained secured throughout the inspection. Staff were observed permitting access to parents at drop off and collection times and the exit routes were adequately supervised at these times. The boundary of the outdoor play areas were secured with a combination of metal grid fencing, wood fencing, dense hedging and concrete walls. There were no obvious weak points in the boundary from which a child could exit unsupervised.
- (c) An adequate source of heating was provided in the service and sanitary accommodation. The air temperature in each playroom and in the sanitary accommodation on the day of inspection registered within the recommended 18 -22°C range. There was documentation available to demonstrate that the heating system was subject to regular servicing and testing. The lighting was provided by natural light leading from glass panelled windows supplemented by fluorescent ceiling light fittings with protective covers or insert ceiling spotlights. The preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation were ventilated by either openable windows or mechanical ventilation systems which were functioning on the day of inspection.
- (d) The premises appeared to be in a good state of repair and was clean on the day of inspection. Internal walls were smoothly rendered and painted with no obvious signs of disrepair. Floor coverings were non-slip and easily cleaned. The building was connected to a mains water supply providing appropriate drinking water for staff and children and running water for cleaning. Documentation was available to evidence that arrangements were in place for professional monitoring of rodent activity on the premises.

(e) There was sufficient sanitary facilities in the service which were adequately equipped with wash hand basins, nappy changing stations and toilets for the number of children in attendance. The running water at each of the wash hand basins was thermostatically controlled to ensure it did not exceed the maximum safe limits.

On the ground floor, there was four toilets, nine wash hand basins and three nappy changing stations for use by children and on the first floor there were four toilets and four wash hand basins for children's use. There was also one staff toilet on the ground floor and a second on the first floor. The configuration of nappy changing units accessible from the baby room was under review by the service as on days were more than 11 children attend the room, the second nappy changing available for use was located in the toddler room.