

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KE010
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Childrens' Circle
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	33 Thornhill Heights, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	W23 ND92
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Martina Stokes
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	20/03/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	n/a
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace road, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Duignan
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	n/a
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### Description of service

The Children's Circle was established in 1993 as a privately run childcare service for preschool children aged 2 years to 6 years by Martina Stokes, the registered provider. The service provides sessional childcare and education to children. The opening hours are 8.45 – 11.45am and 12.00 – 15.00hours, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in spacious open plan room on the ground floor accommodation of a semi-detached house within a residential development located in Celbridge. The service has a secure outdoor play area at the rear of the service. Parking and set down facilities are available.

### Staffing

Children's Circle employs four childcare staff including the registered provider who works directly with the children. There were three adults present on the day of inspection and all were working directly with the children.

The adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education as per the National Framework of Qualifications

### 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 and safety. 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 registered provider, staff members and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

Four staff records were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference were available in respect of four adults employed in the service and one student on work placement whose records were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for four employed staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable, as no persons had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Four adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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) There were nineteen pre-school children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The pre-school was well resourced with a wide variety of age-appropriate play and learning equipment and materials that provided a stimulating and curious learning environment for the children, both indoors and in the outdoor area. All equipment and materials were accessible to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. The tables and chairs provided were child sized which enabled all children to sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. All equipment and furniture were observed in a clean and well-maintained condition.

### 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 entrance door to the service was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school room. The person in charge documented the inspectors visit to the service in the visitor's book on arrival.

Written indoor and outdoor environmental risk assessments were completed daily and maintained to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff. Cupboards were observed secured with safety clasps and medication was stored in the kitchen which was inaccessible to the children. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the safe storage of cleaning agents.

The staff members were aware of the foods that may pose a choking risk to a child. They also stated that they would remove any necklace/beads if observed that a child may be wearing on arrival to the service.

##### Infection Control:

There was an infection control policy in place. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels in paper dispensers were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The children's hand washing practices were well established and supervised by a staff member.

Foot pedal operated bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of used paper towels and other waste materials. Cleaning schedules were available to evidence daily cleaning.

### **Administration of Medication:**

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. Medication was stored safely out of the reach of children. The staff members were aware of the administration of medication policy and the safe practices to follow when administering medication.

### **Safe Sleep:**

A comfortable rest area was available to any child who wished to have a rest or take a break from activities for a while.

### **Fire Safety:**

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed. Fire drills were carried out and records maintained.

### **Outing:**

The service conducts a yearly outing to the local primary school and operational procedures are in place to support the practice.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
    - (iii) an employee, or
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the documented attendance records maintained in the pre-school room.
- (2) Not applicable, as this was not a drop-in service.
- (3)(a)(b) The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.
- (4) The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period of time.

### 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) Persons were trained in in First Aid Response (FAR) for children and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care room.
  - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available to the children attending the service.