

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE040
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Name of Service:	Amanda's Play School
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Address of Service:	51 Moorefield Drive, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W12 F290
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Name of Registered Provider:	Amanda Dunne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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	n/a
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Description of service

Amanda's Playschool was established in 2006 as a privately run childcare service for pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years by the present registered provider.

The service provides sessional childcare and education to children from 9.00am to 12.00pm for 38 weeks of the school year and the setting can cater for a maximum of 11 preschool children.

Learning is facilitated through a play based emergent interest curriculum in the service.

The service is located in a residential area on the outskirts of an urban area. It is located in the registered provider's own home. The service consists of two adjoining rooms and there is a large secure outdoor area to the rear of the property.

Staffing

Amanda's Playschool is operated single-handedly by the registered provider. There is an adult available to provide emergency cover if required.

The registered provider works directly with the preschool children. The adult working in the service has completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 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, health, welfare and development of child 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 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 designated person in charge.

(b) The designated person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection service.

Two records were reviewed

(2)

(a) One written and verified past employer references was available in respect of two adults whose records were reviewed.

(b) One written and verified past reference from a reputable source other than a past employer was available in respect of two adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for two adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six months or longer.

(4) One adult 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were nine children attending the service being supervised directly by one adult.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adult to children was adhered to during the morning.
- (8)(c) The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge operating the service was at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) – (i) A sample of ten records were assessed and all were found to be compliant.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(c) The registered providers ensured that a copy of the regulations was available in the service and was open to inspection on the premises when requested by an authorised person.

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-

(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)(b)

The children were cared for by the same adult which enabled them to form secure relationships, attachments and develop their confidence within the service.

Children were observed to be engaged, happy, content and relaxed within the care room and in the outdoor area.

The staff member ensured the children were supported in all aspects of their physical, emotional and social wellbeing and demonstrated warmth, kindness, affection and respect in all interactions with the children. Children were spoken to using their first name, appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones during all interactions.

The service had a healthy eating policy, and the snacks were observed to be healthy. Mealtimes were social experiences and the staff member sat with the children at snack time. There was lots of conversation and laughter between the children.

Children were supervised and assisted when needed with hand washing depending on their age and stage of development.

A suitable rest area with soft furnishings was available should a child wish to rest or take a break from activities.

The care room was well resourced and presented to provide children with the opportunity for child led imaginative play. Children were encouraged to take part in activities and afforded opportunities to make choices.

Individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wished to engage with specific chosen activities.

The children were provided with outdoor play daily. The outdoor area was spacious, well-resourced, constructively planned and presented; it included space for playground games, blackboards, white boards with chalks and wipeable markers, two propagators with the children's bulbs and plants, river stones for balance activities and a covered area with a mud kitchen and a large wooden sand unit with plenty of associative toys to enable the children to extend their play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. The children were observed to have healthy snacks including sandwiches, crackers, cheese, fruit and yogurts. Children's snacks were placed in the fridge on arrival to the service. Children's drinks were readily available to them throughout the morning.

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 written attendance records maintained.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) (a), (b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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.

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 firefighting 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 was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 8 January 2024.
- (b)
- A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was serviced on 27 July 2023 and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 23 September 2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the entrance hallway and rooms of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children in the service were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection including, indoors and outdoors, during snack time and as necessary for hand washing and toilet use.