

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY079
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Name of Service:	Martinas Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	St Finans Bay, The Glen, Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V23 XV57
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Tarrant
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	28/03/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Child & Family Agency, Social Work Dept, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M Carney
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
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Description of service

Martina's Childcare is a private based service which is registered to offer a full day, part time and sessional early years care and education for children aged 0 to 6 years. Hours of operation are registered as 08:00 to 18:00 hours. The registered provider stated that it currently accommodates a part time and sessional service for children aged from the age of 2 years.

The service is located on an elevated site overlooking the Atlantic in a rural coastal village in west Kerry. The premises operates from a wing of the registered providers residence and a cabin. It offers 2 care rooms with a canopied outdoor room and a spacious garden. There are sufficient toilet facilities for the children, a sensory room and adjoined library.

Available car parking is situated to the front of the premises to allow for the children arrive and depart safely with their families.

Staffing

There are 6 childcare professionals attached to the service that work directly with the children and this includes the registered provider.

Each of the childcare professionals have attained Quality Qualification's Ireland (QQI) in childcare training.

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 and Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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, deputy, 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, 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)

The registered provider was the person in charge and worked directly with the children. A deputy had been appointed to deputise as required. Both the registered provider and the deputy were present on the day of the inspection and available to facilitate the process.

(b)

It was reported and evidenced by reviewing the staff rosters that either the registered provider or the deputy were on the premises whilst the service was operating.

(2)(a)

Each of the staff members files were reviewed, the following information was obtained –

There were 8 written references from past employers with the correct records of validation.

(b)

There were 4 written reference from a source that the registered provider considered to be reputable on file with records of validation.

(c)

Each member of staff had their Garda vetting disclosures updated in October 2022.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the staff had not lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Each staff member had documented certification of Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training on file.

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 the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as described below -

(2)

Small room

There were 9 children aged from under 2 – 3 years attending this room on a part time basis. There were 3 members of staff present.

Naionra

There were 14 children aged 3 – 5 years attending this room on a part time basis. There were 3 children the same age, attending on a sessional basis with 2 adults in attendance.

The adult child ratios were correct.

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)
Each of the children’s registration forms were reviewed and the following sections of the Regulation were found to be compliant –

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) (g), (h) and (i).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service -

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)(h)

Both the small room and the Naionra maintained registers of each child's daily attendance.

(i)

Details of staff rosters and meal breaks were displayed.

(j)

The service had a logbook for the recording of medications. The most recent medication was administered and recorded 03 June 2023. This information was counter signed by both a second childcare worker and the child's parent to evidence that the information had been duly relayed.

(k)

The service had a logbook for the recording of incidents and accidents. There were no entries to date.

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

- Mealtimes were served in a timely manner at approximately 10:30 and 1t 13:00pm. Snack and lunch times were observed to be a sociable event; the children sat together companionably enjoying fun conversation.
- The children had access to their water bottles which were stored on low shelving or trays so that they could help themselves to drinks when thirsty.

- Plates and age-appropriate cutlery was available to them if they wished.
- Clean bibs were to hand as required in the small room.
- The children were encouraged to use the toilets independently and were gently reminded to hand wash following toileting.
- Staff members facilitated additional hand washing after outdoor play, arts and crafts and prior to lunch.
- Only a few children required nappy changing and this was carried out in a flexible and dignified manner in the small room.
- Aprons were available for the children to protect clothing during art activities.
- Each child had their own coat hook and cubby space for bags and personal belongings and storing arts and crafts for home time.
- Children had spare clothes for use in case of spillages.
- Rest areas were developed in each playroom so that the children could opt out of the scheduled activities if they so wished.
- The children had multiple play areas both indoor and outdoor to enjoy free play and the scheduled activities.

Physical and Material Environment –

- The service operated 3 care rooms, namely the small room, the naoinra and the canopied, outdoor playroom. The settings were clean, uncluttered and configured thematically with age-appropriate materials, resources and equipment.
- The rooms were furnished with sufficient, well maintained child sized tables and chairs. There were low level display units so that the children could easily access play resources.
- Each room had play home corners which were offered a generous supply of utensil to invite pretend play.
- Fine motor skill activities included jigsaws, matching games and small construction.
- Sensory play opportunities included sound making equipment, water and sand play.
- A ball pool area was situated within the small room which offered climbing and ball play opportunities.
- A small library was situated by the small room which provided a wide range of colourful age-appropriate books.
- A sensory room furnished with a free-standing larva fish lamp and disco ball was not currently in use.
- Rest areas had been developed in each room that were furnished with matting, low couches and cushions for the children's comfort.
- Walls exhibited murals such as the unicorn scenes and displayed the children's Easter crafts such as bunnies, eggs and chicks.
- The children had access to a large garden which provided a wide range of gross motor skill activities such as ride on toys, bikes and cars.
- There was a large well maintained climbing frame, playhouses, shop, sand pit with cent mixers, tractors, diggers and dumpers.
- There was evidence of the children's planting and picnic benches for use during finer weather.

Supporting Relations around the Children

- The generous adult child ratios allowed for each child to be provided with frequent one-to-one engagement, for example during floor play or tabletop art activities.

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child as demonstrated by their use of gentle tones and good eye contact during facilitation of toileting or assisting with meals.
- Parents were communicated with on a daily basis either verbally or via a digital application regarding notices or general practice issues.
- It was reported that 2 members of staff were completing further training in childcare to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Programme of Care:

- It was stated that a seamless provision of care was practiced at the start of the children's day, whereby the children could choose where they wished to play.
- Daily timetables were developed and displayed in each of the care rooms to illustrate that free play and a wide range of activities and social opportunities were provided.
- Staff members provided documented templates detailing evidence of planned short term and long-term curricula topics. In addition, emergent curriculum topics were logged.
- In both rooms an observation station had been developed, whereby written observation of each child's learning, mastery of activities and experiences enjoyed were recorded and filed in readiness for assimilation and planning of the curriculum.
- Each child had learning journals which depicted photographs and samples of works completed during the year.
- It was evidenced that the service was engaged with Better Start Quality Development Programme with a most recent workshop discussing invitations to play.
- On the day of the inspection, it was found that most of the programme of care was delivered through Gaelige; the children were observed to be fully conversant with this medium, contented, happy and eager to participate in the activities offered such as the making of Easter cards with glitter and glue.

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

- Parents and guardians supplied their children with all required food and drink items.
- A healthy eating policy and this was closely adhered to as observed by the nutritious food and items eaten at lunch and snack time.
- The service was currently operating as part time, so a hot meal was not required.
- The meals observed being eaten on the day were healthy, sufficient and nutritious such as cheese and ham sandwiches, crackers, cheese, yogurts and fruits.
- The children had access to their own labelled water bottles so that they could help themselves to drinks when they were thirsty.

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:

- Martina's Childcare was suitably secured so as to prevent unauthorised access and prevent children from leaving the building and gaining access to the main road.
- Internal doors were suitably secured so as to prevent the children from accessing the storage rooms or the staff toilet.
- The children did not have access to the registered provider's home.
- The windows had safety latches applied.
- Cables and flexes were secured.
- There were no low glazed windows or patios doors that required visibility strips.
- The staff members bags and belonging were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children.
- Play materials were found to be in a good state of repair with no pinch points or sharp edges.
- The garden was secured.

Infection Control:

- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained. In conversation with the staff members it was reported that a clean as you go system was in place with a deep clean on Fridays.
- There was wall mounted sanitising products which were out of reach of the children but accessible and observed to be used by the adults.
- Good cleaning practices were seen for example the tables were sanitised after the art activity and prior to lunch.
- Fridges were available in each room for the storage of perishable items of the children's lunch.
- Hand washing practices were observed by both the staff and the children.
- The children had access to sufficient child sized toilets and wash hand basins; the toilet facilities were clean and well maintained. providing liquid soaps and wall mounted paper towel dispensers.
- The toilet areas had hand wash posters to remind the children to hand wash after using the toilets.
- There were additional low level wash hand basins in the playrooms.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered at 39 degrees Celsius.
- The nappy changing facility was interlinked to the small room. It was clean and well maintained.
- The children nappy changing toiletries were situated within labelled baskets.
- Single use aprons and protective gloves were observed being used by a staff member in accordance with the nappy changing policy. The child's hands were washed after the procedure.
- A non-contact nappy bin was in use for the disposal of soiled nappies.
- Tissues were available to the children for nasal hygiene.
- A system was in place for the cleaning of mouthed toys in the small room.
- There were supplies of protective gloves for adult use.
- Non-contact pedal bins were in use.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that although there were no children currently attending the service that required medications, staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed if medication administration was required.
- Stock temperature reducing medications were safely stored in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions.

Safe Sleep:

- It was stated that the children currently attending the service were over the age of 2 years and did not necessarily require a sleep facility, however stackable beds were available as required.
- Linen and blankets were available for each use.
- Staff members were familiar with safe sleep procedures and the importance of conducting regular sleep checks if a child required a sleep.

Fire Safety:

- It was reported that the staff members were familiar with the steps that are to be followed in the event of a fire.
- The fire cylinders were safely anchored to the walls.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.

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)

Each staff member in the service had first aid responder training (FAR) certification on file, most had an expiry date of March 2023. The deputy provided written acknowledgement that refresher training had been booked with imminent dates for March and April.

(2)(a) and (b)

Each room had their own first aid boxes which were situated on high shelving out of reach of the children out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff members. The first aid box in both rooms were inspected and found to be stocked with the recommended items.

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) Templates recording when fire drills had been conducted on the service were displayed in each care room. The most recent had been carried out on the 27 February 2023. Information included the number of children and staff members present and the length of time of the drill.

(b)
Records informed that the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises had been serviced and checked in March 2023.

(4)
Fire Evacuation plans were displayed in each care room. They clearly provided the visual route to leave the care rooms in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was displayed which detailed that up to 28 children were insured to attend on a part time basis.

Non-Compliance Information

As the service was registered to operate as a full day care service the setting was under insured.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that an additional sum had been paid to ensure that the service was adequately insured as a full day care service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted an updated insurance certificate which documented that up to 28 children were adequately insured to attend the service on a full day care basis. The expiry date was 27 March 2024.

Summary Comment

The submitted insurance document was examined and deemed satisfactory.

The requirements have been met.

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 small room was situated in a separate wing of the registered providers residence and the naionra was situated adjacent within a large static wooden cabin. They were observed to be of sound and stable structure with no visual cracks or defects. The pathways were clean and non-slip. There was no visual evidence of pest infestations. The outdoor canopied care room was watertight.
- (b)
The service was suitably secured. The playground was fenced with solid wooden fencing.
- (c)
The service had many windows which provided natural light and ventilation. Artificial lighting in the service was glare-free, functioning and well maintained.
The service was centrally heated with ambient room temperatures ranged from 18.1 to 19 degrees Celsius.
- (d)
It was observed that each care room were clean and in a good state of repair. Counter surfaces and floors were cleanable and in a good condition. Joints and crevices were sealed. Newly installed artificial grass in the outdoor room was well fitted.
- (e)
There were sufficient toilets, wash hand basins and a nappy changing station available for the number of children attending. One adult toilet was available for the 6 members of staff use.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

(1)
 The service provided 5 playrooms with adequate clear floor space so that the children could the children could enjoy free play, explore their environment, participate in the activities offered and socialise in a supervised manner.