

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY110
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Name of Service:	Scartaglen Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	2 Cnoc Na Run, Killarney, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V93 FV06
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Name of Registered Provider:	Noreen Keane
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow Co Cork.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Scartaglen Childcare Centre is a community run early years service that is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day care to children aged between 0 and 6 years.

The service operates between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:45 pm Monday to Friday inclusive for 51 weeks of the year.

The service operates from a purpose built two storey facility consisting of three playrooms on the ground floor and two playrooms on the 1st floor. There are services such as children's toilets and nappy changing facilities, a staff toilet and staff room, an office area and a kitchen.

There are three designated enclosed outdoor play areas available to the children attending.

Staffing

There were 14 adults employed in the service of which 12 work directly with the children including the registered provider.

There is one adult employed in a cleaning role and one adult employed in an administration role.

Ten staff were onsite during the inspection.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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 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*
- (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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) The person in charge or a named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clear structure in the service that identified the management structure. Each care room had a room leader and childcare workers.

(2)

Fourteen adults work in the service, all 14 adult files were assessed for completeness.

(a) Of the 28 references required 23 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 28 references required 5 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for all 14 adults who work in the service.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who worked in the service and had access to children.

(4) Ten adults held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the national qualifications framework. One staff member held a letter of equivalence from the minister deeming their qualification to be acceptable. Two staff did not hold relevant qualifications and were not part of providing care to the children and were employed as the cleaner and in office administration.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) Police vetting was not on file for two staff who had resided outside of Ireland for greater than 6 consecutive months as an adult. Not appropriately vetting staff prior to them having access to children may allow for inappropriate adults have access to the children.

(4) One staff member who held a qualification from a country outside of Ireland did not have evidence on file that their qualification was equivalent to Level 5 or above in Early Childhood Care and Education or above. Not ensuring staff are appropriately qualified may impede the care and education of the children in their care.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d) A copy of the police vetting for two staff have been obtained and copies have been received. The registered provider has committed to ensuring that all staff are fully vetted prior to them starting.

(4) Qualification equivalence has been placed on file with the staff members qualification. All qualifications will be assessed and equivalence will be on file for all staff where required.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (d) Two police vetting certificates have been received.

(4) Verification of qualification equivalence has been received.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence received the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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) Three of the five care rooms were in operation on the day of inspection.

The adult child ratios were correct in the care rooms as observed throughout the day.

- The Toddler room downstairs cared for children aged from 0-2 years had three qualified staff caring for eight children, in the morning and caring for seven children in the afternoon.
- The pre-school room downstairs had 17 children (aged between 3-5 years) attending in the morning and these were cared for by three adults. There were nine children being cared for by three adults in the afternoon.

- The Baby room downstairs was closed due to reduced numbers attending for the summer.
- The Pre-school room upstairs was also closed for the summer.
- The Toddler room upstairs: there were seven children in attendance being cared for by two to three adults depending on the time and staff breaks, in the morning, and in the afternoon. All children were aged between 2-3 years.

Across the service the staff provided break cover for each other.

The roster provided to the inspector at the start of the inspection was consistent with the staff available to the children throughout the day.

(8) The roster provided to the inspector by the person in charge identified that a minimum of two staff were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The children's needs were met around food and drink provision. Snacks were served between 10 and 10.30 am in the morning and dinner was served between 12 and 12.30. The children did not indicate that they were hungry before this time. Drinks of water were accessible and available to the children throughout the day. Assistance was given to the children that required same when eating and children were observed to be encouraged to be self-sufficient where possible. Appropriate crockery and cutlery were available and used.
- The older children toileted independently and assistance was given with the younger children who needed reminders with hand washing and with their clothing. Nappies were changed as required.
- Care was given to the personal care of the children with children's noses cleaned as needed.
- A rest area was developed in all three care rooms and the children were allowed to rest and opt out of activities as they wished.

- The children were free to move about both indoor and outside and their activities were not restricted, no child was observed to be in a highchair for longer than mealtime.
- The needs of the children when going outside were met when the staff ensured each child was provided with a hat.
- Sleep in the toddler room downstairs was facilitated when the children required sleep and records to reflect this were available for review.

Supporting Relationships

- Each staff member was assigned to a care room. The children were observed to connect with their carer and were accustomed to them. The children were observed to seek their support when required. Staff were observed to spend time comforting the children as needed and sat on the floor or on low chairs to be at eye level with them.
- The children were observed to play alone and play in small and large groups. The groups supported each other especially playing with the blocks and with arts and crafts.
- Parents were spoken to at drop off and collection. Communication with parents was also via the services web-based application for ongoing communication.
- A child who required additional supports had the support of a staff member throughout the day.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The layout of the indoor environment allowed for the children to use their imagination in choosing and doing activities. There were areas of interest and these were grouped so children could play in small and large groups.
- Gross motor development was encouraged outside when using the ride on toys, when digging or when running about.
- Sensory play was encouraged through the use of water trays outside.
- Fine motor development was encouraged through use of blocks and bricks and arts and crafts equipment outside

Programme of Activities:

- The children were observed to participate in a schedule of activities such as free play, outdoor activities and large movement activities. A timetable for the activities was available for review in all care rooms.

- There was a language rich environment noted with children encouraged to sing, recite and participate in stories.

Outdoor Environment:

- The outdoor environment consisted of three areas. The area outside the Toddler room downstairs was covered with soft matting and had numerous activities for sensory and gross motor play which allowed the children to climb and ride on toys. Half of this area was covered and could be used when raining.
- The second part of the yard, also covered with soft matting was used by the older children who had access to footballs and bikes and a shed with sand play equipment.
- The third space consisted of a small grass area with an area that was elevated and was covered with small pebbles and could be used with digging and push toy equipment, encouraging coordination and imaginary play. Some planting was also noted in this area.

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 followed their healthy eating policy and this was displayed through the foods available in the children’s snacks. These contained yogurts, chopped fruit and vegetables, crackers and rice cakes, sandwiches and cheese.
- Dinner served on the day of inspection included Shepards pie or chicken with vegetables and mash potatoes.
- Children who did not eat meals prepared by the service were observed to being in adequate food from home.

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 doors into the service were secured with electromagnetic locks and no child could leave the premises unattended.
- The door from the playroom to the outdoor area was secured with a thumb turn lock and the playground was secured with a high locking system.
- The window openings were out of the reach of the children in the care rooms. The Velux window in the Toddler room upstairs and the window in the sleep room adjacent to the Toddler room downstairs were secured on a latch when the rooms were in use.
- The electric cables were observed to be out of reach of the children.
- The toys assessed were safe and did not have any pinch or crush points.
- The cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- There were wide sections through each glass door to indicate its presence and ensure no child would walk into same and prevented an accident with a child running into the glass.
- Breaks were taken in the staff room which was not accessible to the children and therefore there was no access to boiling water or hot drinks by the children.
- The outdoor area was fenced and was secured to ensure no child could leave unaccompanied

Infection Control:

- The bags and coats for the children were stored off the ground on accessible hooks or in individual shelving units.
- The windows were opened to ensure good air circulation.
- The service was cleaned daily and the cleaning sheets were signed by the staff.
- Tables were cleaned with appropriate disinfectant after tabletop activities and before snack and lunch time and children's meals were served on plates.
- There was hot water in the sinks in the children's toilets in the care room and in the adult toilet in the service.
- There was liquid hand soap and paper towels beside each of the wash hand basins.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered during the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on each child who slept in the service. Historic records were also reviewed. Parents had access to these checks on the services care application system.
- The sleep room temperature was recorded at 22.5°C when children over the age of one year were sleeping in the sleep room adjacent to the Toddler room downstairs. Windows were open and an air conditioning unit was in use. It was warm outside. The staff mitigated the risks of a warm room by placing the children to sleep in very light clothing and by not using any blankets.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door exiting into the outdoor play area was accessible and not locked during the inspection.
- The firefighting equipment was accessible to the staff.
- The door to the Toddler room upstairs was kept closed with a running bolt, although the danger of evacuation in fire existed the need to ensure the safety of a child who had a high potential risk of leaving the room unaccompanied mitigated the risk of the door being held locked.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The grass area outside had some soft matting beside the raised pebble bed, this matting was lifting and separating, this caused a potential risk to both staff and children of tripping and falling.

Infection Control:

2. Although dairy products contained in children's snack were refrigerated, the meat sandwiches and meat slices were not refrigerated to prevent contamination of these perishable items. Not refrigerating perishable items contained in children's snacks may allow for bacterial growth, contamination and potential illness in children.
3. The children in the Toddler room downstairs did not have their hands washed hands before snack, thus allowing for potential contamination of the food with dirty hands which may lead to possible illness for the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The soft matting is to be removed; a contractor has been contacted to commence work on the area. The area has been taken out of use while awaiting completion of the work required. The registered provider has committed that all surfaces in the outdoor area going forward will be constructed of materials that will not cause a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

2. The registered provider has committed that all staff will ensure that all perishable items contained in children's lunches will be refrigerated.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The commitment of the registered provider to take the area out of use is accepted as proof.

Infection Control:

2. The commitment provided by the registered provider is accepted as proof that this action will be completed.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive action and the assurances received the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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) There were five staff trained as First Aid Responders and five staff trained with basic paediatric first aid available to the children. This ensured there was a staff member with appropriate first aid training available to the children should they be required.
- (2) (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

- (e) The service employed 14 adults and they had access to one toilet when two were required. A staff toilet is required for every eight staff. Not having adequate sanitary facilities for the adults may allow for the spread of infectious diseases.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (e) An additional toilet for adults is now available upstairs.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (e) Photographic evidence of the additional toilet upstairs has been received.

Summary Comment

Following the receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the photographic evidence the requirements for this Regulation have been met.