

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD002
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Name of Service:	Springlawn Childcare Community Group Ltd
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Address of Service:	59 and 60 Springlawn Estate, Springlawn, Longford, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 AY98
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frank Horne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	06/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
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

This service is located within close proximity of Longford town and is registered as a sessional service operating from 09:30 to 12:30 hrs Monday to Friday. Children attending are aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 42 pre-school children, at any one time. There are two playrooms operating from two separate buildings namely No 59 and No 60 Springlawn. An office space is provided on the first floor in No 60. There are outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and does not work in the service. There are six staff including the manager, and an adult is employed for administrative duties, cleaning and relief cover.

The staff working directly with the children hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. These staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. Also, it was advised during the inspection that an adult attends the service to teach children action songs and dance.

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. 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 manager, 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*

(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 and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school service was operating.

The six staff files and the person who attends doing the music session with the children were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Fourteen of the fourteen validated written references on file in respect of the six staff and the additional person in attendance were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the seven adults.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that two of the staff and the adult who attends for the music session had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.

(4) The four staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education and the person employed for administrative duties also had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at level 6.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(3) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratio were adhered to.

On the day of the inspection, there were 16 children present. All children were aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years. There were four staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the administrator acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administrative part of the inspection.

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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff. The staff sat and had their snack with the children.
- The eating and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to toileting and toilet training. Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices. On the day of inspection, it was advised that four children are presently been toilet trained.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practise and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child.

- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust.
- being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children).
- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection).
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language.
- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking, nurturing and comforting children.
- using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed in each of the playrooms and used with the children to support their learning.
- The atmosphere in the learning environments were encouraging and unhurried.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times.
- The staff also completed short, medium, and long-term curriculum planning goals.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day while in the service.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child’s abilities, allowing for children’s partial participation and participation with support.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed at free play, painting, stacking, playing house, playing with transport vehicles, and dressing dolls and playing in the home area and at play in the outdoor area.
- The staff read a story to the children on penguins which was the theme of the week.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children’s feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children’s actions and other’s responses.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child’s learning and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. The inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used open ended questions such as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told ‘no’.
- Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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.
- At 11:00hrs, the children had their snack of fruit pieces, yogurt, crackers, wraps, sandwiches, and bread sticks, provided by parents and guardians.
- A drinks area was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to ‘self-serve’ their drinks.
- Perishable items from children’s lunch boxes were stored in a designated fridge in the kitchen.

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 was a buzzer access system, at the main entrance front door.
- The kitchen was secure with a high-level handle and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external play areas were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- The fire doors throughout the buildings were unobstructed.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The temperatures in each playroom were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- The manager clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of risk to the pre-school child.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, and after using a tissue.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchen for the storage of perishable foods.

- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The person in charge had a cleaning schedule template and cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to a child on the day of the inspection. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

Thermostatically controlled water was not available in the sanitary accommodation in the No. 60 Springlawn building. The water was cold and the temperature recorded was between 17.1 to 18.3 degrees Celsius. This was ineffective for infection control purposes. This was also noted as a noncompliance on the previous inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control

The manager of the service submitted a written response on 18th of January 2024 to advise a member of the County Council visited the service to assess the issue of the hot water in building No.60. He showed the manager the timer for the hot water at the tank and how to switch it on for longer, as it was only on for a short time in the morning. The immersion switch was also changed from 'sink' to 'bath' which has provided more hot water for the building. The manager has now adjusted the timer therefore the water stays warm until the children leave at 12:30pm. The temperature remains at approximately 30 degrees Celsius throughout the morning as seen in the attached picture.

The County Council have contracted a plumber to come out and install a new digital timer for the tank in No.60. This will be easier to use and control for the staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence was submitted of the correspondence with the county council.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

Evidence was provided that five adults had completed their First Aid Training.

(2)(a) In room 1 and room 2 there were first aid boxes with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible by the adults and stored in a conspicuous position.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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 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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was carried out, on 28th of November 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated September 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the smoke and fire detection system was dated 15th of November 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

It is acknowledged that subsequent to the inspection, the manager submitted evidence to the office of the early years inspectorate that the smoke and fire detection system was serviced on 12th of December 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

On 12th of December photographic evidence was submitted by the manager of the service record of the smoke and fire detection system.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, which was for a sessional service for 24 pre-school children

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.