

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD023				
Name of Service:	Whizzkids Drumlish Community Childcare CLG				
Address of Service:	58 Mill Race park, Mill Road, Drumlish, Co. Longford				
Eircode:	N39 DK63				
Name of Registered Provider:	Monica O'Haire				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/09/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>43</td> <td>PM</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </table>	AM	43	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government buildings, Convent road, Roscommon town Co Roscommon.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy and Karen Folan
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

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Description of service

This detached full day care service is in a housing development in the village of Drumlish, Co. Longford. The service operates from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care pre-school programmes are offered. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years of age. There are four playrooms, the baby room, and the Junior Preschool room are on the ground floor, while the Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2 are on the first floor. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. Quiet rest areas with child size seating are available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There are two sleep rooms- one with five cots available for younger children requiring sleep provision and the second sleep room had a cot and low stackable beds and sleep mats for older children's sleep provision. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing emerging interests, and an enquiry-based programme is provided. Additionally, the service is registered to provide an after-school programme for school aged children.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are eighteen staff working in the premises. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. Additionally, there are two designated chefs who prepare, cook and service the meals / snacks. There is also a designated caretaker driver.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy 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.*

(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 and the deputy person in charge were on the premises when the early years inspectors 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 children were present.

(2)(a) &(b)

Since the last inspection on the 6th of April 2023, seven new staff had commenced working in the service. These staff files were reviewed. The vetting files for the other eleven staff in the service had been previously inspected and were found to have been compliant.

Fourteen of the fourteen written validated references on file in respect of the seven new staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eighteen staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Documentary evidence indicated that one of the new staff, had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting on file.

(4)

The fifteen 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.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

Documentary evidence indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. 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.

(2)

The person in charge ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 43 children present

- 1 baby aged 10 months,
- 5 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 12 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 25 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were ten adults directly caring for these children. Additionally, the person in charge and deputy person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.

In the afternoon, at 15.00hrs, there were 25 children present

- 1 baby aged 10 months,
- 4 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 10 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 10 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were eight staff, directly caring for and supervising these children. Additionally, the person in charge and deputy person in charge acted as childcare relief.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that there were always two staff on the premises while the service was operating.

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,

Compliance Information

- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible.
- All meals and snacks were supplied by the service. The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The staff complied with the service's healthy eating policy.
- The tables, chairs and highchairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting.
- On the day of inspection, the children from the Baby room, Junior Preschool room wore nappies and were changed in one of the designated nappy changing areas, in a sensitive and timely manner, and on a regular basis.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in a designated cosy area in each for the playrooms. Additionally, there was two designated sleep rooms-one with five cots for younger children's sleep provision and the second sleep room had one cot and sleep mats for the older children's sleep provision.
- In the Baby room, the children had soft floor matting / space to explore and move safely. There was adequate seating provided for a staff member to facilitate feeding and comforting a young child. The children in the Baby room were observed playing with a selection of sensory equipment, musical instruments, shape sorters, building blocks, soft toys, a selection of books and activity centres and at play in the outdoor area.

- In the junior playschool room, the children played in the home area and construction areas and within the outdoor area. The children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, playing house / kitchen in the outdoor area. The children were observed linking, connecting, stacking, constructing, drawing, and painting.
- The staff were observed to be very engaged in the children's play activities with much conversation between the staff and the children.
- Older children in Preschool 2 room had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play in the outdoor area drawing/ painting, playing house / kitchen, using transport vehicles, and at water play and bubble play. The children chatted to the inspectors about their most fun activities in preschool. In the outdoor area the children played with sand, on rockers, slides, and were observed building blocks, drawing, playing group games, and played football. They were also observed playing in the mud kitchen, riding on tractors/ bicycles, chasing, running, and playing catch'. The staff acknowledged a child's achievements, 'well done', 'that's great' and the children were observed laughing and having fun.
- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
 - having a key person system for each child,
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
 - 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,
 - using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
 - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
 - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
 - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.

- On speaking with the staff, the inspectors were informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages, by phone calls, and by email.
- The younger children had individual my child record communication books advising of the child's like, interests, needs and preferences. The records also included food and sleep provision, nappy changes and any individual childcare needs. These records were given to parents and guardians on a daily basis.
- The staff created classroom and individual learning journals / profile books for each child, showing the themes, experiences, and activities engaged in, along with photographs.
- 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 activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. The inspectors noted the staff acknowledged a child's achievements 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. 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. Older children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and a gate so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the areas or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The door into the kitchen, office, and staff room had a system of security.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were intact safety straps as per manufacturer's instructions, on the highchairs in the Baby room.
- There were high-level windows in the playrooms, as a safety security precaution.
- There were visibility stickers on glass doors as a safety measure.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Documented risk assessments for the playrooms and outdoor play areas were available for review.

Infection Control:

- Staff prompted and supervised the children to wash their hands before eating and following nappy changing / toileting, messy play, and outdoor play.
- Adequate liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary areas and the playroom wash hand basins.
- There were two designated nappy changing areas. The nappy mats were intact. The children's barrier creams were individually labelled. The staff had the practice of immediately disposing off individual soiled nappies in the designated outdoor waste bin. Staff wore disposal aprons when nappy changing.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was available in the service. There were suitable cleaning products available in the service.

- The inspectors noted high contact areas were cleaned regularly, as per best practice guidance. The outdoor play equipment was cleaned prior to/ after a child's use, with documented records maintained.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in each of the playrooms.
- There were foot pedaled lidded bins in the sanitary areas and playrooms.

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.

Safe Sleep:

- There were two designated sleep rooms- one with five cots for younger children's sleep provision and the second sleep room had one cot and sleep mats for the older children to rest.
- On the day of inspection, younger children were observed sleeping on demand.
- Stackable beds and sleep mats were available for older children requiring sleep if required.
- The sleep policy detailed the correct temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements.
- The inspectors observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes. The service kept documented sleep records. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child (as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy) and the signature of the staff member who checks the sleeping child.
- A wall thermometer was available in the sleep rooms and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child. Cellular blankets that allow air to circulate were used for all children under 2 years of age.
- In each playroom, quiet rest areas with a child size seating and soft matting were available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so.

Fire Safety:

- Records on file demonstrated that fire drills were carried out frequently which helped to ensure that adults and children were familiar with the procedures in the event of an actual fire.
- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

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. Ten staff members had current training in first aid for children.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box downstairs and one first aid box upstairs with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible 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 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 the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated 29th of August 2024.

(b)

Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 26th of August 2024. The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 26th of August 2024.

(4)

Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2025 was for 70 children and included the following -

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