

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LD029 |
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| Name of Service: | ABC Childcare Drumlish |
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| Address of Service: | Kilnashee, Drumlish, Co. Longford |
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| Eircode: | N39 V210 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Collette Brennan |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Dates of Inspection: | 17/10/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 56 | PM | 40 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon |
| Inspection undertaken by: | A Kennedy and M Farrell |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

ABC Childcare Drumlish is a service registered to provide full day care, part time and sessional services. It is situated in a rural setting near the village of Drumlish in Co Longford. Services are provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years of age between 8:00 and 17:30 hours. Sessional services are provided from 9:30-12:30 hours. The service is also registered to provide school age services. The premises consists of the main building which is on the lower ground floor of the registered provider's home, with a separate access to the rear of the building, and two portable cabins. There are four playrooms, a sleep room, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities in the main building. One of the portable cabins contains two playrooms and sanitary facilities and the second portable cabin contains the service's staff room.

Staffing

There are 17 staff in the service including a regional manager who works between five services, a service manager, childcare staff, and a cook employed to prepare, cook and serve the meals/snacks. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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 areas of governance, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 23, 25, 28, 29 however, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

A regulatory compliance meeting was held with the registered provider on the 25th of November 2024 in relation to a significant non-compliance under Regulation 9 validation of references.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the regional manager, 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.*

(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 named designated person in charge in the service and two named staff members to deputise as required in their absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present in the service on the inspectors' unannounced arrival and remained present throughout the inspection.
- (2) There were seventeen staff members working in the service. The following vetting documents were available on file in the service for the seventeen staff members:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers including their most recent employer for 12 staff members and one written reference from their past employer was available for 2 staff.
 - (b) One staff member had two written validated references from sources other than past employers and three staff had written validated references from other sources on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seventeen staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived outside of the state for more than six months as adults.
- (4) There was evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent on file for 14 staff members who worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting and qualification documentation was unavailable on file:

- (2)
- (a) Written validated references from past employers were required for three staff members. One reference for a staff member which was submitted following inspection was found to be falsified. This was confirmed by the manager during a discussion with the inspector.
- (4) The information available in relation to the qualifications for one staff member was insufficient to show that it met the requirements of the regulation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a)
- One staff member has since left the service therefore no reference has been obtained for them. The falsified reference has been addressed. A new reference has been obtained for this employee and a new reference check validation has been completed.
- The third staff member has again contacted their most recent employer regarding provision of a reference. A copy of an email request was submitted by the service.
- The registered provider will ensure that all staff prior to employment have submitted the required references. In addition, for any references that cannot be sourced, the registered provider will ensure that there is evidence that all avenues have been exhausted to obtain same.
- The regional manager for the service will carry out the reference validations going forward to ensure they are carried out diligently and effectively. A new quarterly human resource checklist has also been created to be completed with all new staff as they start and quarterly after that. This checklist includes ensuring there are two written references on file from the most recent employers in line with their curriculum vitae/ employment history.
- (4) A new qualification certificate has been received for the staff member.
- In future the service will ensure that qualification certificates are obtained for all staff.
- This has been added to the service new quarterly human resource checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated reference, email relating to reference request for staff member and a certificate of qualification.

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held with the registered provider on the 25th of November 2024 in relation to a significant non-compliance under regulation 9 validation of references.

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has addressed the non-compliance found during the inspection process. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) On the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service there were 10 adults working directly with 56 children in the service.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were adhered to on the day of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Baby playroom: Two staff cared for two children aged under one year and three children aged from one to two years of age during the morning and one staff cared for three children, one child under one year and two children from one to two years of age.
- Junior Toddler playroom: Two staff cared for nine children aged between one to two years during the day.
- Senior Toddler playroom: Two staff cared for ten children aged two years in the morning and 12 children aged two years in the afternoon.
- Junior ECCE playroom: One staff cared for eight children aged from two to three years of age during the morning.

Junior/Senior ECCE playroom: One staff member cared directly for ten children aged over three years attending morning sessional services. The playroom catered for school aged children in the afternoon. Senior ECCE playroom: Two staff provided direct care to fourteen children aged over three years in the morning and sixteen children during the afternoon of the inspection.

(8) (a) There were at least two adults always present in the service during the inspection. A sample of records reviewed found that two adults were present at all times when the service was in operation.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(i) A review of staff attendance records/roster and discussion with staff found that there was no record of some of the staff's attendance in the service on the day of the inspection or the previous day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(i)

A new rota clearly detailing where staff are located and their hours of work has been completed. All staff were informed of the importance of accurately signing in and out daily.

The service has ensured all staff understand the importance of completing records accurately each day. The manager will do weekly checks to ensure the records are recorded correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the service's new rota.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 16 has been addressed satisfactorily by the actions taken and evidence submitted to the Inspectorate by the service. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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:

Measures were in place to allow staff control access to the building and prefabricated unit and prevent children from leaving unnoticed. The main building's entrance door was secured when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. Handrails were in place at the small wooden stairs leading from the emergency exit door of the Junior/Senior ECCE playroom to the outdoor area. Safety gates were in place at the internal doorways to the playrooms in the main building used by younger children to prevent them from leaving the areas unnoticed when doors were opened. Cleaning products were stored on high shelves or cupboards in the service. Pairs of scissors were stored on high shelves out of reach of children in the Senior Toddler playroom. The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C. All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition. Fire doors throughout the buildings were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

Separate containers were available to store soothers. Cleaning schedules were on display in the service and staff members kept records of the cleaning carried out. The tables and highchairs were cleaned by staff after children's meals and messy play activities such as painting. Staff told the inspector that a refrigerator was available to store children's additional snacks provided from home for children attending the Junior/Senior ECCE playroom. A refrigerator was also available for the storage of the prepared babies' bottles. Windows were opened in the playrooms to ventilate the rooms.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspectors that a child in one of the playrooms may require medication to be administered in relation to an allergy whilst in the service. The staff were aware of the correct procedures for the storage of the medication, which was observed to be in date. There was a record system to record any medication administered that was to be checked and signed by two staff members. A care plan was available for review in relation to the administration of this medication.

Safe Sleep:

There was a designated sleep room with eleven cots for younger children's sleep provision. On the day of inspection, children were observed sleeping on demand. 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. The records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child and the signature of the staff member who checks the sleeping child. A digital thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore allowing remedial action to be taken when temperatures were above 20°C and below 16°C. A supply of clean linen was available for each child. Age/tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets, that allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 2 years of age. Stackable beds labelled with children's names were set up in the Senior Toddler playroom after dinner for the children to rest and sleep on. Each child had their own bed and bed linen that the staff informed the inspectors was laundered at least weekly by the service and more frequently when needed. The stackable beds were spaced at least 50cms apart as required. The staff remained in the playroom to supervise the sleeping/resting children.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for fourteen staff members. However, three of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Tubes and containers of suncream were stored in a low cupboard that did not have a securing mechanism in place in the 'prefab' sanitary unit and were potentially accessible by the children and posed a safety risk.
3. A warm kettle was stored accessible to children beside the sink in the Senior ECCE playroom and posed a safety risk.
4. A string of coloured fairy lights was positioned at a low level beside viewing mirrors and potentially within reach of the children in the Senior Toddler playroom and posed a safety risk to children.

- On the day of inspection at 11.20hrs there was a temperature reading of 44.7 °C from the warm water tap at the wash hand basin used by children in the Junior ECCE playroom and at 13.08hrs a temperature reading of 44.7 °C from the warm water tap at the wash hand basin in the nappy changing area off the baby room. These water temperatures were above the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent potential risk of scalding.

Infection Control:

- After dinner the staff in the Senior Toddler playroom used wipes to firstly clean the children's faces and then used the same wipe to clean the children's hands posing an infection control risk as the children's hands were not adequately cleaned.
- Open bins were used in the playrooms in the prefabricated unit to dispose of items including blue paper towel used during handwashing/drying and waste food and were not the required foot pedal operated waste bins.
- In the Baby room the covers of two highchairs were ripped/torn thereby preventing effective cleaning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Three garda vetting renewals were obtained. A new quarterly checklist has been created to keep on all staff files to monitor expiry dates.
- A security lock is now in place on the cupboard. Ensuring that locks are on all cupboards has been added to the sanitary area cleaning checklist.
- The kettle has been moved into a cupboard with a lock out of children's reach and only used when an adult is standing beside it and replaced when not in use. Ensuring the kettle is stored out of children's reach in a locked cupboard has been added to the room cleaning checklist.
- The fairy lights have been secured to the wall. The room cleaning sheet has been updated to ensure all trailing flexes are secured to the wall.
- The thermostat was adjusted by the registered provider. Regular water checks will be taken to monitor the temperature of the water and documented on the cleaning sheets.

Infection Control:

- All staff were given information on safe handwashing and explanations of the importance of handwashing. They were informed that using wipes for cleaning hands was not satisfactory.

7. The manager will monitor room practices to ensure adequate handwashing is taking place in all rooms and that safe handwashing information is displayed in each room. This has been shared with all staff.
8. New foot pedal bins are in place with a double compartment one for recycling and one for general waste. Segregation of waste will be monitored by management to ensure the correct bins are being used. The cleaning sheets have been updated to include that the bins are foot pedal bins and in a good state of repair.
9. Two new highchairs have been purchased. Monitoring highchairs to ensure that they are in a good state of repair with no rips or tears has been added to the room cleaning checklists.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copies of garda vetting renewals for three staff, the staff vetting file checklist and photographs.

Infection Control:

Photographs and a copies of safety checklist/inspection.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate have assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deemed it to have met the requirements under Regulation 23.

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) Evidence of up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training certificates for three staff members were available for inspection.
- (2) (a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in the service.
(b) The first aid equipment was in date and readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

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 in place for the maximum of children registered attending services at any one time. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for the numbers of children attending. There were three toilets and three wash-hand basins provided in the prefabricated playroom's sanitary unit. Two children's toilets and two wash hand basins and two nappy changing units and two wash hand basins were provided in the nappy changing areas.

Liquid soap and paper towels were available in the sanitary units for handwashing and drying.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) There was evidence of chipped paint on sections of the wall in the Baby room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

(d)

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Baby room has been painted. Checking paintwork has been added to the maintenance check list.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the paintwork.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate have assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deem it to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found under Regulation 29.