

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH016
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Name of Service:	Claddagh's Treasures Preschool
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Address of Service:	69 Claddagh Park, Tom Bellew Ave, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 Ay6P
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Flynn
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	43
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Claddags Treasures is a community-based service, managed by a voluntary committee and in operation since September 2006. The service provides Full day care, Part- time and Sessional care to Pre-school children from 2 to 6 years. The maximum number of children that can be accommodated is 51 and the service operates from 8:30 – 5:30 daily.

The service operates from a purpose-built building within a residential area of Dundalk town. There is off street parking available for parental drop off and collection. There are 3 care rooms in operation namely ECCE Rooms 1, 2 and 3. There is an outdoor play area on the premises and the ancillary accommodation consists of storage area, utility room, office, kitchen, and sanitary accommodation.

Staffing

There are 20 staff employed in the service including the following:

- Seventeen childcare staff who work directly with the pre-school children, which includes the service manager, designated person in charge and deputy person and staff who provide relief in the service.
- Three staff members who are employed to carry out catering and cleaning duties and caretaker duties.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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,

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The deputy person was on the premises when the inspectors arrived to the premises at 11:05am and was present throughout the inspection. The designated person in charge arrived on the premises at 11:20am and was present in the service for the remainder of the inspection.

(2) Following a discussion with the service manager and a review of the staff roster it was confirmed to the inspectors that there were 2 new staff members present in the service since the last inspection.

(a) and (b) The staff files in relation to the 2 new staff members were viewed on the day of inspection:

- Two written and validated references from a past employer or another source were available for the 2 new staff employed in the service.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each of the 2 new staff members.

Garda Vetting disclosures were also reviewed for the additional 18 staff members of staff employed in the service. 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 not required at this time for the 2 new staff members.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 2 new staff members of staff who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the day of inspection there were 3 preschool rooms in operation namely ECCE Rooms 1, 2 and 3

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspectors arrived unannounced to the service;

- **ECCE Room 1**

There were 8 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 2 members of staff.

- **ECCE Room 2**

There were 14 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 5 members of staff.

- **ECCE Room 3**

There were 24 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 4 members of staff.

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were present in the service and provided relief in the care rooms as required and also carried out administrative duties. Two additional adults were also on the premises and were engaged in catering and maintenance duties.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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,

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Supporting Relationships

- A key worker system was in place throughout the service and the names of the children, and their key worker were on display in the care rooms. The staff when questioned were familiar with their allocated key children. This promoted the development and sustainment of relationships between the children, their parents, and the staff in the service.
- In EECE Room 3 staff were familiar with strategies and plans in place to support child who required additional assistance while attending the service.
- The staff were observed down on the floor with the children in Ecce Room 2 and 3 and were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. In both rooms, the staff were observed

actively engaging with and supporting the children with their activities. Staff sat at each table during dinnertime to provide assistance and also encouraged social interactions and conversations at this time between the children and staff.

- Staff used an electronic application (an 'App') to provide information to parents on their child's care and daily routine in the service on a daily basis. Information shared included details of each child's personal care routines such as what they ate, when they slept, nappy changes and play activities. The staff also reported that communication with parents is conducted verbally at collection and drop off and there was a parents notice board with information in the hallway. Documented written daily diaries were available for children whose parents requested a written record.
- A staff communication book was in use in both rooms where staff recorded incidents and information to be communicated between each other.

Programme of Activities:

- A variety of the children's art activities were on display throughout the service which included strawberry handprints, shape painting, and 'funky feet'. These reflected the thematic curriculum plans that were on display in the rooms.
- The children were observed to engage in a variety of activities that promoted many areas of development including; sensory play, table-top activities, art activities, large group activities and outdoor play.
- Individual plans for children who required additional supports in the service were available and were being implemented. The plans reviewed during the inspection, detailed the developmental stage of the child and the strategies being implemented to promote the children learning and development in the service. In general evidence was available to demonstrate that management and staff had discussed and planned how strategies were being implemented to achieve the children's identified goals.

(2) The use of corporal punishment was not observed during the inspection. The Behavioural Management Policy for the service also stated that "we will never inflict corporal punishment on a child" and the staff were familiar with the policy. The person in charge and staff also informed the inspectors that all staff had recently completed "promoting positive behaviour" training.

(3) Soft tones and positive language were observed in interactions between the children and staff. Minor behavioural issues were addressed and not allowed to escalate with staff positively engaging with the children e.g. "We don't throw stones...let's put them in the bucket Instead". When this intervention did not work the staff

member then redirected the child to another activity in the outdoor area. Clear instructions were given to children to support transitions between activities, tidy up time and when getting ready for dinner time for example children were asked to “listen up” and “turn on their listening ears”. Staff had activities set up in advance to support the smooth transition between activities. Children who did not wish to engage in an activity were supported and facilitated in this choice.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- The staff were observed to accompany the children to the front door at collection time.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments were evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in the service to support hand washing. Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection e.g. after toileting and nappy changing, after outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.

- Mouthed toy boxes were available in the care rooms and were observed in use for the removal of toys used by the children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for 20 staff members. However, 9 of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

All staff were re-vetted including the 9 staff members whose vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYIRN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

All staff will be re-vetted together every two years to ensure that the timeframe is maintained while also allowing for delays, etc.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence of renewed Garda vetting for all staff members in the service.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The last recorded on 22/04/24.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises dated the 05/24 and 27/04/2024 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place for a maximum of 51 children attending the service on a full day care basis up until the 27/03/25.