

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH027
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Name of Service:	Field of Dreams
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Address of Service:	68 Cypress Garden, Bay Estate, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 NV63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sheena Folan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	07/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood
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

Field Of Dreams is a privately owned childcare service and has been operating in this setting since 2007. It provides sessional care and education to pre-school children aged 2-6 years. The service can cater for a maximum of 11 pre-school children and operates from 09:00 - 12:30 each weekday.

The service is located in a residential area of Dundalk Co. Louth and operates from a purposively developed playroom in a domestic dwelling. There is a separate sanitary area and the children have access to an enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the sole operator of the service. An emergency contact person is available on the premises as required in the event of an emergency

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/ 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, 11,23 and 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 inspector would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the *registered provider* 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)&(b) The person in charge who is also the registered provider was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced and was present throughout the inspection. An emergency contact person is available on the premises as required in the event of an emergency.

(2) Two staff files presented for inspection and the following were reviewed:

(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source, available for the registered provider and the emergency contact person.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each of the registered provider and emergency contact person.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not required at this time.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the registered provider who works directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification.

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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

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

(3) On the day of inspection one staff member was working directly with the 8 pre-school children present, all of whom were attending on a sessional basis and were aged between 3 years to 5 years.

(8) (c) An emergency contact person was available on the premises as required in the event of an emergency.

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

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children were observed to move freely in the care room.
- Healthy eating was promoted in the service as was evident by the snacks which were provided by the children's parents/guardians.
- The children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by the staff member as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- The children were observed to independently access the soft area to take a break and to read a book with their friends.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

- The registered provider is a consistent person in the service thus supporting relationships between the children and adults.
- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and the staff member present.
- Verbal feedback was given to parents and guardians at drop off and collection, additionally phone calls, social media and email are also used for communicating with parents.
- Links between the service and home were promoted and evidenced by the presence of ("Mo Chlann" i.e. my family) pictures of the children's family which were on display in the playroom. Additionally, learning journals are in development for each child, and these contain samples of the children's artwork and photographs of activities that are sent home as a 'keep sake' at the end of the school year.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The physical and material environment, both indoors and outdoors supported children’s learning and development. The playroom contained a suitable range of play materials and equipment which were appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children and laid out to accommodate the needs and interests of the children in the room. These were stored on open low-level shelves and were freely and readily accessible to the children. Although not accessed during the inspection due to heavy rain, a variety of balance beams, playhouses, a climbing frame, and climbing tunnel were available that supported balance, imaginary play and gross motor development.
- Clearly defined interest areas that were well resourced, supported the pre-school children in initiating and sustaining play activities with real-life, wooden and open-ended materials provided. For example; a home corner, a library area, a mark making area and open low level shelving units with a variety of small world toys and toys to develop manipulation skills including bricks, blocks, jigsaws, shape sorters, were amongst the interest areas and play equipment provided.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in the playroom which was reflective of the Christmas theme e.g., Rudolph painted paper plates, handprint antlers and handprint Christmas trees.
- There was evidence of curriculum planning in the service and the children’s interests were also on display and included “ I want to learn about.....” which the registered provider confirmed was used to inform the weekly and monthly curriculum plans.

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:

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to snack times and after activities.
- Up to date documented cleaning records were on display in the care room.
- Lunches that contained perishable items were appropriately stored in the refrigerator.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in use in the service and were appropriately maintained.

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments was evident in the service.
- Low level windows were appropriately restricted.
- The radiators were guarded so that a child could not touch the surface.
- The outdoor area was enclosed and secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

Infection Control:

1. There was no nappy changing mat available in the service to carry out a nappy change if required. Additionally, there was no policy available to guide best practice in relation to nappy changing procedures in the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

Field of Dreams will now provide a 'Nappy Changing Policy' to include an emergency plan of action should a child's parent or guardian not be available to tend to their child. A staff member will assist the child if this occasion arises. Our toilet area will be equipped with a nappy changing mat, latex gloves, and aprons. These new measures will be reflected in the updated version of our 'Nappy Changing Policy'. These new measures will be affected

immediately on site, with parents being notified via a messaging application with an attachment of our updated policy.

The Field of Dreams 'Nappy Changing Policy' has been updated to reflect procedure in situations where a parent cannot be contacted or is unavailable. This has been implemented and is reflected in the Field of Dreams 'Policies and Procedures' document.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Updated nappy changing policy

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance has been addressed. Implementation of the corrective and preventative actions will require assessment at the next 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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of a First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for one adult in the service and detailed 09/2025 as the due expiry date.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was available in the service and was stored in conspicuous location where it is easily accessible in the event of an emergency