

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH027
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Field of Dreams
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	68 Cypress Garden, Bay Estate, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A91 NV63
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sheena Folan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	12/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.Flood
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	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 area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and 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 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 registered provider who is also the person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 10:10 and was present throughout the inspection. An emergency contact person was 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.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for 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 10 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 IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The enrolment forms for each of the 11 preschool children attending the service were reviewed. The forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

### 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's lunches were provided by the parents and were appropriately stored in the refrigerator. Some of the children were given roles of responsibility distributing the lunches and this promoted their independence. The children were also encouraged to open their own lunches, and assistance was also provided if required. Snack time was divided into 2 breaks - Lunch 1 & 2 which was observed to be a

social, interactive occasion with all children observed seated at the tables chatting about Christmas time. Children who required additional time to relax and eat their lunch were facilitated and were supported by the staff. The children were encouraged to ‘tidy up’ after their lunch promoting their independence e.g. “have you got it....? Do you need help?”.

- 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 had a change of environment to the outdoor area where they engaged in a variety of outdoor activities and were facilitated to choose what toys and equipment they wanted to play with.
- The children were observed to access the soft area to take a break from activities and to read a book.

### Supporting Relationships

- Communication with parents was mainly at drop of and collection times. The registered provider also confirmed that photographs and weekly curriculum information are shared through small media messaging service. Phone calls are also reported to be used if required.
- The registered provider was observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. The children were observed to seek out the staff member for assistance. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff member for example, “*....is my helper today...good boy getting everybody’s lunch*”, “*will I take a photo of your tree...that’s lovely....good girl. I will take a photo and send it to your mammy*”.
- “My family tree” pictures of the children and their families supported a connection between the preschool and home.

### Physical and Material Environment

- The playroom was a bright and spacious play area with a variety of developed areas of interest that supported many areas of development. The interest areas were well resourced with a variety of toys and equipment including a selection of real-world materials including; a home corner, sensory area, montessori equipment, manipulative toys including a variety of blocks and jigsaws, mark making corner and book corner.

- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment was available in the care room. Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in the room which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- A variety of the children's artwork was on display and was reflective of the Christmas themed activities e.g. Christmas trees, sticking and gluing pictures plus Christmas words and a vocabulary display.

### 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 and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.
- The outdoor play area was gated and secured with fencing to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger. The registered provider was observed to carry out a risk assessment prior to the children accessing the outdoor area.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards.

##### 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.
- Frequent hand washing practices were observed to be carried out after toileting and outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities.
- All perishable items provided by the parents for snack time were stored appropriately in the fridge.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.

## 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 record was maintained of the monthly fire drills which had been completed in the service. The last recorded was 11/25.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises dated the 22/01/2025 and 11/2025 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises