

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH063
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Moneymore Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Roaches Lane, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A92 D267
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Martina Kearney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	51	PM	38
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Taaffe and AM Coyle
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Moneymore Childcare Centre commenced operating in this setting in September 2007 and is conducted from a single storey purpose-built premises located in a residential area in Drogheda in Co Louth. Pre-school children aged 1 to 6 years are accommodated in this not-for-profit service on a full day care, part-time and sessional basis. The service operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm each weekday for 50 weeks of the year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00 midday for 38 weeks each year. School aged children are not accommodated in the service. There are 4 care rooms in operation, namely the Baby Room, the Toddler Room, the Pre-school Room and the ECCE Room. There are three separate sleep rooms provided in the service, two of which adjoin the Baby Room and one adjoining the Toddler Room. Outdoor play is facilitated in enclosed areas directly off the Baby Room, in a separate larger area to the rear of the premises off the main hallway, and in a recently developed third area provided in a section of the grassy area adjoining the ECCE Room.

### Staffing

Moneymore Childcare Centre is governed by a Board of Management. The registered provider is the chairperson of the Board of Management and is not present in the service on a daily basis. A service manager is employed who coordinates the day-to-day operations of the early years service supported by the office manager, both of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications and who are available to assist with caring for the children when required. Nineteen further core staff members are employed to work directly with the children in the service, with 1 of these staff members currently on long term statutory leave. Of these 19 staff members, 4 are employed in a job-sharing capacity whilst 2 are employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to work with children with additional needs, in posts funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. In addition, the service cook is employed through a Job Initiative scheme. Three additional adults working in the service are participating in a Community Employment (CE) scheme, each of whom holds a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Two college students were also present in the service in a supernumerary capacity on the day of inspection as part of work experience placements whilst undergoing a Level 5 college course in combined Early Childhood Care and Education and Special Needs Assisting.

### 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, 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) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.00am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

All staff files were reviewed. A total of 28 files were maintained in respect of the registered provider, the service manager, the office manager, 19 core staff members who care for the children, the cook, the 3 CE participants and the 2 students.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 28 adults whose files were reviewed.

(a) Forty-one written references were from past employers.

(b) Fifteen written references were from sources other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 28 adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for 3 staff members from the relevant countries in which they had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) All of the 21 staff members, (namely the service manager, the office manager and 19 core staff members) in addition to the 3 CE participants, who work or may work directly with children in the service, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or had been issued with a letter of eligibility to practice following an assessment of their qualification by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

### 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 day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Baby Room there were 9 children aged 1 year 1 month to 1 year 9 months being cared for by 2 core staff members, supported by a CE participant who also held a childcare qualification. A college student was also present in this room in a supernumerary capacity as part of a work experience placement.
- In the Toddler Room there were 10 children aged 2 years and 2 years 7 months being cared for by 5 staff members.
- In the Pre-school Room there were 20 children aged 2 years 10 months and 4 years 6 months being cared for by 6 staff members. Thirteen of these children were present in the service on a full day care or part-time basis.
- In the ECCE Room there were 12 children aged 2 years 9 months to 3 years 7 months being cared for by 4 staff members. Seven of these children were present in the service on a full day care or part-time basis on the day of inspection. A college student was also present in this room in a supernumerary capacity as part of a work experience placement.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service.

### 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 observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

#### Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed to be caring and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs and preferences.
- Mealtimes were observed to be a social occasion with staff members observed chatting to the children when having their meals in the dining rooms which created a relaxed atmosphere and promoted social interaction between the children and the adults. The children were given plenty of time to eat and were not rushed. The children's independence was encouraged and children who were able were allowed to and praised for feeding themselves, with assistance provided by staff members when necessary. Children from the Baby Room and Toddler room wore bibs to protect their clothes at mealtimes.
- The children who were not yet toilet trained had their nappies changed regularly and also, in between scheduled changes, as often as was required. Staff members from the Baby Room and the Toddler Room were heard chatting and singing to the children when they were having their nappies changed. The staff members were observed to be sensitive and responsive to the children's cues to use the toilet, with supervision and assistance provided when necessary.
- Staff members in the Baby Room informed the inspector that the children were generally facilitated to sleep in line with their home routine but that children who showed signs of tiredness would be facilitated to sleep when their needs dictated outside of the scheduled times. The children in the other care rooms who still availed of a day-time nap were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest after dinner.
- Detailed individual care plans were available and observed to be implemented for a number of children attending the service.
- All children in the service engaged in outdoor play on a number of occasions on the day of inspection.

### Supporting relationships:

- The inspectors observed the children to be familiar with the staff members. Children sought guidance and support from the staff members using their names in a relaxed and comfortable manner. The children were given time and encouragement to communicate with the staff members both verbally and non-verbally and staff members demonstrated skilful interaction strategies to support the children's engagement in conversation and play. During the inspection staff members were observed acting as play partners with the children both indoors and outdoors. The staff members were frequently heard making reference to the children's siblings, parents, pets, cousins and other extended family members by name which nurtured links with family and home.
- One child in the Baby Room attended the service on a part-time basis and on the day of inspection had returned to the service following a period of absence. This child needed extra comforting and attention at times which was provided consistently throughout the day by the staff members, to soothing effect.
- The inspectors observed the children in all rooms to be engaged in activities that were planned based on the children's interests or which the children had chosen themselves. Staff paid close attention to children's emerging interests and kept note of this information to incorporate when planning the weekly curriculum of activities. The staff members in each room were observed to build the children's confidence by praising and encouraging their involvement in activities and on completion of tasks.
- Staff members communicated with parents and guardians on a daily basis, both informally during drop off and collection, and through update in real time on mobile tablet devices regarding each individual child's snacks and meals, nappy changes, sleep times and activities. Parents could remotely access this information online throughout the day, in relation to their own particular child, and could message the staff members working in the care rooms during the day if required. Notices displayed in the front hallway were also used to communicate general information with parents.

### Physical and material environment:

- A suitable variety of play materials and resources were available in all care rooms. Materials were accessible on low-level shelving to facilitate children's independent choice and play. Two interconnecting rooms were operated jointly as the Baby Room and each of these rooms contained age-appropriate play materials and equipment for the youngest children attending the service. Toys and play materials suitable for the age and stage of the children accommodated in each room were provided to support the development of the children's fine motor skills with standard jigsaws, pegged wooden jigsaws, wooden and plastic bricks, interlocking plastic toys, shape sorters, small world figurines and animals, stacking toys and threading equipment were observed.
- Each care room including the Baby Room had designated areas of interest established with home corners, construction areas, arts and crafts areas and library areas observed. Sensory play experiences were facilitated indoors with sensory trays containing a variety of materials including sand, water, dried rice and leaves provided in care rooms and also in the outdoor play areas.
- The service had recently completed fitting out a multi-sensory room containing an enclosed den with an opening on one side, a therapeutic body roller, bubble tubes, fibre optic strands, a colour pattern light projector, weighted blanket and soft surfacing. The sensory room was used during the inspection to facilitate children to access a calming space and to enable staff members to carry out specific learning activities with children as part of their care plans.
- The children's artwork was displayed in the care rooms, as were photographs of the children at play and on the birthday walls.
- Two adults' armchairs were provided in the Baby Room to allow staff members to sit with and comfort the children whilst they were being cuddled.
- The outdoor play area adjoining the Baby Room was surfaced with impact-absorbent material and contained a range of sit-on and push-along toys for the youngest children in the service. Shelter was provided beneath a small covered lean-to canopy outside the care room door which shielded the children from sun and rain. The service supplied all-in-one wetsuits for each child in the Baby Room to enable the children to play outdoors throughout the year. A larger safety-surfaced area located to the rear of the premises off the front hallway was used by the children attending the Toddler Room, Pre-school Room and the ECCE Room. A locked storage shed containing a broad range of ride-on toys was in place in this area.

Through the support of funding provided by a multi-national company as part of a corporate philanthropy initiative, a recently developed third outdoor play area was provided in a section of the grassy area adjoining the ECCE Room. This area contained a spacious outdoor kitchen, a sit-on tyre structure made to resemble a long snail, a slide, a swinging tyre attached by a rope to a mature tree, and a digging patch securely covered with a net frame, all play equipment which was accessed by the children attending the ECCE Room when playing outdoors during the inspection.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Adequate facilities for rest and sleep were provided in the service for the number and age range of children attending. There were three separate sleep rooms provided on the premises. The sleep room which adjoined the larger section of the Baby Room contained 4 standard cots whilst the sleep room which adjoined the smaller section of the Baby Room contained 3 standard cots, one of which was on wheels for evacuation purposes. The sleep room adjoining the Toddler Room contained 2 cots and 2 small beds.

Digital thermometers were provided in each sleep room and, in discussion with the inspectors, staff members accurately described national best practice safe sleep guidelines regarding the prevention of sudden infant death, including safe sleep room temperatures. All cots were observed to be in good condition with appropriately fitting supportive safety mattresses. None of the children aged 2 years or older needed to sleep on the day of inspection; the staff in the Toddler Room informed the inspector that the children slept in either a cot or bed at the service's designated sleep time after dinner, depending on their age, sleep requirements and home routine. Within care rooms there were suitable rest areas equipped with soft matting and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if required.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

All meals and snacks were prepared by the cook on site in the service’s recently renovated kitchen. All children ate their meals and snacks in either of the two dining rooms adjoining the kitchen. The service provided cereal and fruit for the children’s breakfast until 9.45am if required. On the day of inspection yogurt and apple slices were served for morning snack, with fish fingers, beans and potato waffles served for dinner, chopped or mashed as required for the younger children in attendance. The two-week menu on display showed a variety of dinners were provided in the service including shepherd’s pie; roast chicken with potatoes, cauliflower and broccoli; spaghetti Bolognese with garlic bread; ham with potatoes, carrots and cabbage; and chicken curry with brown rice and naan bread. The menu showed that fruit slices and raisins were served following dinner on a daily basis. Staff members confirmed that alternative food options such as plain pasta or rice, fruit, toast, crackers or yogurts are available if required or requested by a child. The documented tea options included sandwiches, pancakes, sausage rolls, spaghetti hoops and wholemeal toast, beans on toast and soup and bread. Sandwiches were served for tea on the day of inspection. Children’s dietary requirements are also catered for, as observed in dietary care plans on display in each room. Drinking water was served with meals and freely available and accessible to the children in each care room throughout the day.

### 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 entrance doors and garden gates were secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. Entry to the premises was facilitated by a staff member who released a magnetic door lock on the glass door at the main entrance, having sight of callers in advance of facilitating access.
- The water temperature in the hot taps did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Play materials and equipment provided in each care room were observed to be safe and suitable for the children present.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The management team maintained records of monthly audits conducted in the service. These included a review of medication administration records, accident and incident records, first aid supplies, cleaning schedules and storage of cleaning products to ensure adherence to appropriate record-keeping and safe practice.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins in the service.
- The premises' play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition. Documented up-to date cleaning schedules were available.
- The children in the service were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following outdoor and messy play. Children who were toilet trained were gently reminded, and assisted when necessary, to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Staff members wore individual aprons and gloves for nappy changing procedures and washed their own hands before changing gloves between each nappy change. Children's hands were washed after they had their nappies changed.

- The service implemented effective soother management procedures, with all individually labelled soothers sterilised daily in a microwave steriliser in the Baby Room and stored in personalised containers when not in use.
- The sand tables and digging pit provided in the outdoor play areas had appropriate lids or net covers available and were covered when not in use, to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were performed and documented on all sleeping children.
- Based on an examination of the children's attendance records maintained in the service, all children under 2 years of age had access to a standard cot on a daily basis. All children aged less than 2 years slept in a standard cot on the day of inspection.
- The temperature in the sleep rooms was monitored and recorded on a daily basis and was maintained between 16 - 20°C.

### Fire Safety:

- In discussion with the inspectors, staff members were familiar with appropriate procedures to be undertaken in the event of a fire or any other emergency which would require evacuation and confirmed that fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis. The fire assembly points were identified verbally by staff members and through signage in place outside the premises.

### Outings:

- The service manager stated that the service did not conduct outings.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present on the mobile tablet devices used in each room to record attendance, noting arrival and departure times, and these details were also recorded in written format in roll books maintained in each care room.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspectors were requested to record their attendance on the premises and the purpose of their visit.

## 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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for 6 staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster.
- (2)(a) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations in each care room and in the service kitchen.
- (b) The first aid supplies were available to the staff members at all times for the children attending the service.