

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LK168 |
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| Name of Service: | Sunny Lane Creche |
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| Address of Service: | Sunny Lane, The Avenue, Main Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick |
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| Eircode: | V9473F4 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Anne Mcnamara |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 13/03/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 71 | PM | 65 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick |
| Inspection undertaken by: | J Ryan |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

This full day care service is located in a rural village setting. A service is provided to children aged between 1 – 6 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.45 hrs and 17.15 hrs (including a sessional service from 09.00 hrs to 12.00 hrs for 38 weeks of the year). The service is operated from a building on the main street with 5 playrooms. Facilities for outdoor play are available on site.

Staffing

There are 17 adults on the staff roster and of these 16 work directly with the children which includes the registered provider. All staff have childcare qualifications.

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 9,11,15,19,20,24, 25,26 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 health, welfare and development of the child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the wobbler room and the preschool room.

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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all 17 staff members and were reviewed on the day of the inspection.
- (a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.
- (b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.
- (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff.
- (4) All staff had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d) One staff member who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months did not have police vetting from the police authorities in that state. This non-compliance was identified in the last inspection report dated 30/08/2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting for the one staff member has been obtained and checked by the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police vetting was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the requirements of regulation (9)(2)(b).

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(2) At all times during the period of the inspection the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of the inspection there were 15 staff working with and supervising 71 children in the morning and there were 14 staff supervising 65 children in the afternoon.

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) A sample of 12 records for a preschool child were examined and each record contained the information as listed (a) – (i).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1)(a) 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS:

The healthy eating policy of the service detailed a well-balanced and nutritious menu. The full time cook freshly prepared all meals daily. Dinner consisted of chicken, vegetables and mashed potatoes and chicken curry was available for the older children. Most children were observed to self-feed and were given assistance by staff where required. The menu for the day was displayed at the entrance to the service which kept parents informed and facilitated good communication between the service and parents.

Drinking water was available throughout the day in each room if a child was thirsty and needed a drink. The children sat together at the tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat and enjoy their food.

The children who were toilet trained toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it.

Children in nappies were changed regularly by staff whilst following the nappy change policy.

The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid antibacterial soap. Staff were observed to wash their hands regularly throughout the day.

Children could rest and relax as desired throughout the day in each room in the library area on adult/child sized couches, cushions and on floor mats. Each room appeared homely, comfortable and inviting for the children as additional floor mats and seating were provided.

Children under 2 years of age slept in traditional type cots and were observed to be checked by staff every 10 minutes in line with the safe sleep policy of the service.

Wobblers were observed to be held and cuddled and their positions were changed regularly. The service had a policy of introducing beakers at an early age and children have generally moved on from the use of the bottle at 12 months of age.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement within each room and in the outdoor play area. The outdoor play space was used at intervals throughout the day and supported children's physical activity and social interaction.

The children were encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour.

Relationships around children were supported as the core staff in the service had not changed since the last inspection and children were familiar with staff through the use of the keyperson system in each room. Staff had a good understanding of the benefits of the use of the keyperson system.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service was operated from a purpose-built building in a rural village. Children were accommodated in the following rooms: wobbler room (12months- 18months), toddler room (2 years), junior preschool room (3 years), preschool room (3 years) and montessori room (3- 4.5 years). There were 2 sleep rooms with cots for children aged less than 2 years.

Rooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Shelving units were also used effectively as room dividers to create play spaces, such as the library area, home corner construction area, small world area and arts and crafts area. Other interest areas included: sand play area and tabletop activities area. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials.

Treasure baskets of natural materials were available for the younger children which helped support sensorial development.

The walls of the rooms and the display board outside the rooms were decorated with posters and the children's artwork.

Facilities for outdoor play were available and there was good choice of play equipment and children organised their own play activities which supported their social development.

The area was surrounded by high walls and gated and there were smaller outdoor play areas directly off each room. Outdoor play equipment included a large climbing frame, bikes, trikes, ride on toys and playhouses. Children were observed playing in small groups, climbing and running about. Regular trips in buggies for the younger children took place around the village which supported children's sense of identity and belonging.

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) There were 17 standard cots in two separate sleep rooms available to the children in the wobbler room and the toddler room.

Cots were in a good state of repair and each mattress had a safety standard.

There was adequate space between cots and the room temperature was maintained between 16- 20 degrees celcius.

Children were observed to be physically monitored while asleep and a sleep record was maintained.

Children greater than 2 years of age slept on sleep beds in the playrooms and staff remained in the room while children slept.

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) Attendance records were maintained for each child who attended the service with details of their time of arrival and their time of departure.
- (3)(a) A visitors book was maintained which detailed the daily record of persons who visited the service other than the following
- (i) Pre-school child attending the service.
 - (ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.
 - (iii) An employee.
 - (iv) An unpaid worker.
- (b) A daily record was kept of all adults who entered the service.

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) There were two staff trained in first aid for children available all times.
- (2) (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the hallway.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last recorded date of practice of fire drill was March 2024.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last maintained in September 2023 and the smoke alarms were last maintained in February 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in the hallway.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The Insurance certificate for the service was available and adequate and had an expiry date of March 2024.