

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM005
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Name of Service:	Breffni Childcare
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Address of Service:	Breffni Family Resource Centre, Breffni Crescent, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim
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Eircode:	N41 X9D6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tricia Maye
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello
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

This full day care service is located in an urban setting in a residential area in Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim. A service is provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 18:00 hours. A school age service is also provided. The premises is located in a dedicated section of a single storey, detached, family resource centre and has three care-rooms and an enclosed courtyard outdoor play area.

Staffing

On the day of inspection 10 adults were employed in the service. Eight adults worked directly with the preschool children including the person in charge. One staff member worked in the Kitchen. The person in charge worked in the office and was available to cover breaks as required. An additional adult student was present in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with preschool children.

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

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 wishes 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

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(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 to deputise as required.

(1)(b)

The person in charge remained on site for the duration of the inspection. On a review of staff attendance records the person in charge or deputy person in charge was always present in the service.

(1)(c)

A governance chart displayed the lines of accountability in the service. On discussion with staff members they were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) (a) (b).

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that two new adults had been employed since the previous inspection. One of

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these new staff members work directly with the children. On the day of inspection, one student was present on an educational work placement programme.

A total of two files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 11 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Four written and verified past employer references were available in respect of the two new adults in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for the one new adult who had resided outside the country for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3)

The vetting procedures required were all completed prior to an adult having access to a preschool child.

(4)

Documentary evidence was presented to demonstrate that one newly employed staff member had obtained 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

For the purpose of this inspection, a sample of the required written policies, procedures and statements that are specified and required under schedule 5 of these regulations were reviewed. The following policies, procedures and statements were included as part of this inspection:

(c) policy on administration of medication.

(e) Policy on managing behaviour.

(f) Policy on safe sleep.

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(i) outings

(j) policy on accidents and incidents.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There are an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were eight adults working directly with 26 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and eight adults working directly with 22 children in the afternoon. The person in charge was available to cover breaks throughout the day as required.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

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A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The person in charge confirmed that information evenings are held prior to enrolment where all parents are provided with the necessary information outline in regulation 16(1).

A notice board in the hallway provides up to date information on policy change, curriculum update and how to give feedback to the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The person in charge demonstrated that a copy of the act is available in the service for parents, staff and the authorised person.

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-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (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.

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Three rooms are in operation in the service, and all three rooms are designed to capture the imagination of the preschool child and encourage participation and play. Each room is focussed on the age and stage of the child's development with size appropriate furniture throughout the service.

Opportunities for all types of play are supported in the service. Imaginary and role play are supported through home corners and activities, dress up areas, construction areas with building blocks, cars and trucks. Sensory play is supported through wall sensory boards for younger children, tuff trays and baking. Language development is supported through extensive libraries in all rooms. Creativity is provided in arts and crafts, and all rooms and hallways are decorated with evidence of the children's artwork.

Outdoor areas are equipped with ride on toys, footballs, climbing frames, swings and slides and provide an alternative environment for the preschool child. Opportunities for risky play and gross motor skill development are provided.

(1)(b)

Rest areas are provided in each of the care rooms in the form of soft furnishings of mats and cushions and child size sofas. Stackable floor beds are provided for those children who wish to take a nap or have a rest period.

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

The person in charge described how they provide balanced meals and snacks each day. This was further evidenced by a review of the menu plan, a discussion with the cook and staff members and observation of dinner in the service. Breakfast, dinner and all snacks are provided by the service in line with the healthy eating policy. On the day of inspection spaghetti bolognese was the main meal of the day served. The cook informed the inspector that alternatives are provided as some children may not like pasta, so option of rice is also provided. Allergies and food preferences are catered for and parents' choices are supported. For example, some children may be lactose intolerant or vegan and this is facilitated for within the service.

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The older preschool children bring in their snack from home and this is stored in the service fridge until snack time.

Jugs of water are provided 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 door to the main building was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, ensuring no unsupervised access or unapproved access to the service.
- All exit doors were secure throughout the service.
- Materials and resources were well maintained and durable.
- A shelving unit which was unsecure was moved when brought to the person in charge attention and replaced with a secure unit to reduce the risk of falling.
- Staff members were observed to bring the first aid pack to the outdoor play area in case of emergencies.
- Waste was inaccessible to the preschool child.

Infection Control:

- The service was visibly clean with cleaning records up to date in the care room.
- Children were observed to wash hands prior to mealtimes and after using the bathroom or messy play.
- Nappy changing was observed to be in line with the service policy.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for effective hand hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day. However, on discussion with the staff members, they were aware of the medication policy in the service and the steps required in administering medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Children in the wobbler toddler room were provided with stackable floor beds for sleep time.
- Rest areas were available in all care rooms to support children to relax or opt out of an activity.

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Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation routes remained free of obstruction throughout the inspection.
- Assembly points were clearly displayed to the front of the building.
- A record of monthly fire drills were available in the service.

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.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

Attendance books in each room recorded the times of entry and departure for each preschool child.

(2)

Accurate records were available of children's daily attendance.

(3)(a)(b)

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The person in charge authorised entry to the inspector on arrival to the service. Identification was checked and contact details recorded. A logbook included the visit of all contractors, unpaid workers and visitors to the service.

(4)

The person in charge is aware of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for the period set out in regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The person in charge demonstrated that children in the service were supervised at all times. There was enough trained and qualified staff working alongside the children in all care rooms. Staff members were observed to communicate with each other, informing each other who they are supervising and if they were leaving the room for any occasion. In the outdoors staff members ensured to complete a risk assessment before entry and positioned themselves to ensure children were in view.

At mealtimes, staff members were observed to sit alongside children, promoting independence and offering support or assistance when needed.