

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM031
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Name of Service:	Dowra Childcare Service Company Ltd
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Address of Service:	Dowra Resource Centre, Dowra, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	N41 X8Y9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anna Mc Tiernan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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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).

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Description of service

Dowra Childcare Service is a not-for-profit sessional day care service which is located in a resource centre in Dowra, Co Cavan. Care and education is currently being provided to children aged between two and six years and the operating hours are from Monday to Friday between 09:30 and 13:00. The service has an enclosed outdoor area to the side of the property.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there was three adults employed in the service and an additional adult employed through a community employment scheme. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16k, 29, 23, 25 and 27.; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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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.*

(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.*

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(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 person in charge and a person able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge facilitated the inspection and was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear line of accountability with staff members being aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2)(a)(b)

There were four adults employed in the service to include three adults employed by the service and one adult employed through a community employment scheme.

Seven written and verified past employer references and one written and verified reference from another source was available in respect of the four adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all four adults. 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 three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of six months as an adult.

(3)

The service had completed all vetting procedures prior to an adult having access to a preschool child.

(4)

Three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were four adults working directly with 16 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(3)

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 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;*

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- (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.*

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
 - (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

Twelve records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1)(k)

The service had an accident and incident book in place which recorded all accidents and incidents in the service. The serviced used a supplementary detailed record for more serious accidents and incidents.

(2)(b)

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

(3)

These records were made available to the inspector on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

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(4)

Parents/guardians were informed of any accidents or incidents as evidenced by parents' signature on records. However, the service did not ensure that parent only had access to the information pertaining to their own child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the Registered provider started:

(4)

A new book has been introduced for accidents and incidents that records one incident at time. We will use this book going forward and parents will only have access to information pertaining to their child.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have been reviewed and deemed adequate. This regulation is now complaint.

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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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The main care room is adequately equipped to provide a sessional service to preschool children. The large room is designed considering the movement of the child ensuring clear pathways and space between interest areas. The interest areas are set up to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child. Opportunities for sensory play are provided with water and sand tables, which the children have free access to for the duration of the session.

Opportunities for role play and creativity are provided with home corners, dress up areas and construction areas. Children were observed to use building blocks and magnets to create buildings and farms. Fine motor development is facilitated through pin boards, suckers, jigsaws and puzzles. Language development is supported through and extensive library and music.

The outdoor area provides an extension of learning. This environment has been designed to ensure that children are safe while promoting imagination and creativity. A climbing frame with slide and tyres allows for risky play and gross motor skill development. A purpose-built mud kitchen with resources and home area provides opportunities for role play. Enclosed sand areas allow for sensorial play in all weathers. A storage area stocked with bikes, trikes, tractors, building blocks and athletic equipment provides an opportunity for children to develop their balance, agility and coordination. A fully enclosed area is an extra outdoor room, equipped with various toys and resources, tables and chairs ensuring children have access to types of play in the outdoors as well as indoor care rooms.

(b)

A rest area is provided in the form of a large couch, soft floor matting and cushions. This area allows for children to rest and take a break throughout the session.

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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 service was secure on the inspector's arrival.
- The outdoor area is secured by high wooden fencing and a high wall with a locked gate.
- Bins are stored away from children in the outdoor area.
- Cleaning products are stored out of reach of the preschool child.
- The kitchen is inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- Children's hands are washed prior to snack time, after messy play and after using the bathroom.
- Warm water liquid soap and paper towels are provided for effective hand hygiene.
- The service is visibly clean with materials and resources in good condition.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained clear from obstruction.
- Emergency evacuation procedures were clearly displayed on the walls of the care room.

Outing:

- Emergency evacuation doors remained free from obstruction on the day.
- Fire evacuation routes were clearly sign posted.
- The emergency evacuation assembly point was located to the front of the building in the car park.

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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 was always available to the preschool children as evidenced by certification for two adults working in the service.
- (2)(a)(b)
- A fully stocked first aid box was available to the preschool children as required.

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

- Children are well supervised at all times. The staff members maintain active supervision through constant visual and auditory awareness, appropriate positioning and proactive engagement with children to ensure their safety well-being and inclusion.
- Effective supervision is maintained indoors through appropriate staff deployment, clear sight lines and purposeful movement within the room. Staff remain attentive and responsive ensuring children are supported guided and always protected.
- Outdoor play is well supervised with staff members strategically positioning to monitor all areas. Staff actively engage with children, manage risk appropriately and ensure that supervision levels remain consistent across the play area.