

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS040			
Name of Service:	Na Páistí Community Crèche			
Address of Service:	Link Road, Portarlinton, Co. Laois			
Eircode:	R32 K510			
Name of Registered Provider:	Carol McCann			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	18/11/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	36
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.			
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C. O'Connor Hughes			
Title:	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).				
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.			

Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service to operate between the hours of 07:45 and 18:00. The age range of children that the service is registered to accommodate is 0 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by a community provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Six pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a kitchen, office, staff room and reception area are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated in an urban area in the town of Portarlinton, County Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. The designated person in charge, deputy and sixteen staff members were present during the inspection including staff working directly with children and in various administrative and support roles including a chef and a caretaker.

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/ premises and facilities. 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 co-operation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The service submitted a change in circumstance to the TUSLA registration office noting a change of the designated person in charge. The change in circumstance was accepted by the registration office on the 31 March 2023.

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.*

(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)

A designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and deputy were present for the duration of the inspection.

Thirty-one files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of seven staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children held qualifications at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of eligibility deemed by the Minister.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were forty-seven children attending the service supervised directly by fourteen adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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 children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Children were observed to enjoy free play, story time and choosing their own activities supported by staff. Young children were observed crawling and exploring their environment at their own pace supervised by staff. In the baby room a comfortable, supportive chair was available to staff for bottle feeding and nurturing young children. Children were dressed appropriately in coats and hats for outdoors and enjoyed the play experiences in the outdoor play area. During snacks and mealtimes, the staff sat with small groups of children, providing support and offering assistance as required. Younger children were encouraged to feed themselves. Children wore bibs to protect their clothes at mealtimes. A staff biography "our team" was noted in the reception area of the service. Staff were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Children were content with their carers and staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff interacted well with young children during nappy changing by making eye contact and smiling. Positive praise was given to children on the completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff was observed.

The service worked in partnership with parents. A handheld electronic device is used to record information relating to the children's activities and daily life in the service. An "all about me" information record was available for each child. The children's learning journals depicted children's developmental progress and activities during the year.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available for all children. Areas of interest were noted in the pre-school rooms and included home areas, construction areas, arts and crafts, dress up, sand play and small world items. Materials included paint, modelling dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

The baby room was a bright spacious area and babies had free movement within the room. A soft matting area was available for babies. Toys and equipment included a ball pool, wall instruments, sensory play, musical stands and instruments. Children's artwork and photographs were displayed in the pre-school rooms.

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 19 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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A sleep room was located adjacent to a pre-school room. The sleep room was equipped with nine cots and an evacuation cot for use by children under two years of age. Low level beds were available for children over two years of age to sleep. Soft furnishings provided appropriate rest facilities in the pre-school rooms for any child who wished to avail of rest and relaxation.

(3)(a)

A large outdoor play area was available for the children. Natural grass, bark and all-weather surfaces were in place. Toys and equipment included three playhouses, cycle paths, stepping stones, benches, basketball hoops, plant and dig areas, wall mounted games, chalk boards and climb/slide/swing units. Canopies provided shelter outside some of the pre-school rooms.

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

A menu plan was available. Refrigerated storage facilities are available for the storage of perishable food.

Parents provide the mid-morning food for their child attending the ECCE programme.

The main meal and other snacks are freshly prepared on site for the children. The main meal consisted of a vegetable pasta bake. Milk or water were available to drink. Dietary requirements were catered for. Additional food servings were available if required. The service operates a nut free policy. A daily menu plan was displayed in the entrance hall.

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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. A coded system was in place for access to the service. The Inspectors signed the visitors book in the reception area of the service.

Daily checklists were available and reviewed in respect of the pre-school rooms and the sanitary accommodation.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the pre-school rooms and the sanitary accommodation. The temperature of the water recorded at the wash hand basins was approximately 33 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing practice

observed was carried out as per the displayed procedure.

Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers in a fridge. Feeding bottles of prepared infant formula were stored correctly in the fridge in the baby room.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. Appropriate documentation was in place in respect of medication administered to children.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log maintained in the sleep room. The sleep room temperature noted was 16 °Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed throughout the service. A fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area.

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.

(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)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.
- (3)(a)
All entry to the service apart from (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) must be approved by a staff member.
- (b)
A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.
- (4)
The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of 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)
Ten adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). The roster indicated that FAR cover was provided during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
A first aid box was available in a prominent location in the service.
- (b)
A first aid box was readily available to children in the pre-school service.

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)

There was a record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 16 October 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment were serviced on the 4 October 2024 and 18 September 2024 respectively.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 29 December 2024.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

The service submitted a notification in respect of (b) to TUSLA on the 15 February 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge provided all information required for the inspection.