

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH076
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Name of Service:	Home from Home Daycare
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Address of Service:	Curragha Rd, Ratoath, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 PP29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lesley Harkin
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray & AM Cunningham
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
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Description of service

Home From Home Daycare provides full day care, sessional and part-time care to children from 1 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). Hours of operation are from 07:30am to 6:30 pm. The building is a converted residential property consisting of 4 care rooms, 2 cot rooms, office, kitchen, children's dining room and sanitary facilities. An additional care room downstairs was not in use.

The rooms in operation were as follows:

Downstairs:

Wobbler room provides care for children from 1 to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Toddler room facilitates the care of children from 2 to 3 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Upstairs:

ECCE Year 1 provides care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

ECCE Year 2 provides care and education to children from 3 to 6 years.

The outdoor area to the back of the building was divided into three areas by wooden fencing. An additional outdoor area was available off the dining room.

Staffing

Employed in the service were a manager, assistant manager, 10 childcare staff, 1 administrative staff however an additional administrative staff member was providing cover and a cook.

Present on the day of inspection were the assistant manager, 8 childcare staff, 1 administrative staff and a cook.

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 cooperation of the assistant manager, 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) Thirty-validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for 15 adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for 8 staff who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Application has been made for police vetting and will be submitted to the Inspectorate once obtained. The registered provider will ensure that staff members requiring police vetting will have vetting on file before commencing employment.

Police vetting was submitted to the inspectorate on the 10/01/2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of application for police vetting.

Police vetting received on the 10/01/2024.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 9 (2) (d) Management and recruitment.

The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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

The following policies and procedures were reviewed and deemed to be adequate:

- Staff Induction Policy.
- Behavioural Management Policy.
- Parents Hand Book which includes all policies and procedures for the service and a declaration form for the parents to sign that they have read and agree with the content.
- Admission Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

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) Present on the day of inspection were the assistant manager and 8 childcare staff working directly with the 36 children attending the service. The assistant manager was available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.

The rooms were as follows:

Wobbler room had 2 adults caring for 5 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Toddler room had 3 adults caring for 11 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Upstairs:

ECCE Year 1 had 2 adults providing care and education to 9 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

ECCE Year 2 had 1 adult providing care and education to 11 children ranging in age from 3 to 6 years.

(8)(a) According to the staff roster two adults were present on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

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,

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Older children generally were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.

- The children in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms who became upset or who awoke from sleep were nurtured and cuddled until they were ready to re-join their group.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children’s learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. The theme of the week in the Wobbler room was “Farm Animals” and in the Toddler room it was “Community Helpers” with the children’s artwork displayed to reflect these themes. The theme for ECCE Year 1&2 rooms included Christmas activities with the children practising for their Christmas show and enjoying painting reindeers.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- A record was kept in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed on to parents or guardians by an electronic tablet device.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on the “Family Wall.”
- Children in the ECCE rooms enjoyed visits from parents as they discussed their occupations, for example a mechanic visited the room, showed the children all the tools, the tow truck and sat with children chatting. On another day a parent brought in books about dinosaurs with lots of different dinosaur toys to show the children.

(3)The staff spoke to all children in a positive way and listened attentively to each child. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones. Children’s behaviour was managed in a positive way, and it was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and appropriately by the adults who were observed to engage respectfully with the children in their care.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Basic needs:

1. Two children’s needs to use the toilet was not responded to in a timely or child centred manner, at 12.55pm, in the dining room a child requested a staff member to take them to the toilet. Just at this time a second child stated they needed to use the toilet also. Dinner was just starting in the room at this time.

The children were required to wait a further 10 minutes before the deputy manager was free to take the children to the toilet. This did not meet the children's basic care need for toileting appropriate to age and developmental stage of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) Two core staff members were absent on the day of inspection. There are usually 3 staff available to provide lunch cover. In the absence of staff members being available in the future staff can contact another staff member by phone to help out if necessary. The manager will monitor this practice on a daily basis.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 19(1)(a). The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted.

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.
- (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)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in all care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Two cot rooms were available for the Wobbler and Toddler rooms with 6 standard cots in each room. Stackable beds were available if required for older children.
- (3) There were four encloses and secure outdoor areas available to children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- The 3 outdoor areas to the rear of the building were divided into separate areas by wooden fencing. Equipment included toy kitchen, swings, goals, climbing frame with slide, wooden tree blocks to sit on, balance beams, tyres and ride on toys. An additional covered area was located off the hallway with a surface consisting of soft matting. Equipment was brought out to this area for the children to play with.

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 service had a 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry all prepared onsite by the cook. All food was provided by the service.

On the day of inspection, the children had a variety of snacks ranging from fruit, crackers and toasted sandwiches which were served at 10:30 am and at 3pm.

Dinner was served at 11:30 am which consisted of fish, vegetables, mash potatoes and gravy. Water and milk were the drinks of choice with water available in the care rooms 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The outdoor spaces were secured by gates and the main door to the service was secured by a buzzer system. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- Individual boxes were available for the children's pacifiers.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot rooms were maintained between 16 to 20^o C while children were sleeping. Thermometers were available on an electronic device to monitor the temperature.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A staff member on 2 occasions wiped a child's nose without washing her hands afterwards.
2. A staff member did not remove her gloves after changing a nappy and continued to dress the child with the gloves on.

3. Staff and children's hands were not always washed after nappy changing.

4. The mattress cover was torn with foam exposed on the following 2 cots:

- Wobbler Cot room: cot 5
- Toddler Cot room cot 2

A torn mattress cover does not provide a smooth surface for adequate cleaning.

General Safety:

5. A trailing flex was present from the music system in ECCE Year 2.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1-3. Staff have been given the Infection Control Policy to read and to sign off on.

The manager will ensure that the policy is implemented in practice on a daily basis.

4. Two new mattresses have been ordered.

The manager will conduct a regular risk assessment to ensure all surfaces are smooth for adequate cleaning.

General Safety:

5. The music system has been re-located so that the trailing flex is out of reach.

The manager will conduct a regular risk assessment to ensure all trailing flexes are secured and out of reach.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Infection control policy sign off sheet stating that all staff members have read policy.

Mattress order forms.

General Safety:

Photographic evidence that the music system has been re-located.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23 Infection Control and General Safety. The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 08/10/2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 02/10/2023.
- (4)A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) On the day of the inspection there was no servicing record for the fire fighting equipment however a servicing record was submitted to the Inspectorate on the 30/11/2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The firefighting equipment has been serviced. The manager will ensure that the firefighting equipment is serviced on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Servicing record for the fire fighting equipment.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 26 (1)(b). The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 80 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to the 27/03/2024.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) &(c) There was a complaints policy in place for the procedure to be followed in the management of complaints within the service.