

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH103
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Name of Service:	Duleek Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Main Street, Abbeyland, Navan Road, Duleek, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92R9DF
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Daly
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	5
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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:	AM Cunningham & S McKenna
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

The service provides a sessional and part time care to pre-school children aged from 2 years to 6 years and operates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the Preschool Room from 09.00am to 12.00 midday (an afternoon session is also registered from 12.30pm to 15.30pm which is not operating at the moment). The registered provider provides a choice of part-time hours so that the pre-school children can attend a maximum of 5 hours between 09.00am and 14.00hrs. The pre-school is situated in the village of Duleek in a commercial premises which was converted to a childcare facility. The service comprises of 2 pre-school rooms namely Preschool Room and Afterschool Room. The Preschool Room has access to sanitary accommodation in the hall and the Afterschool Room sanitary accommodation is located within the room. An office, kitchenette (located off the Afterschool room) and disability access toilets are also available. Parking is available to front of the building and an outdoor area is available to the back of the building which can be directly accessed from the Preschool Room.

Staffing

There are four staff members employed in the service which includes one staff member who provides AIM support, and the fourth staff member provides care to school aged children only.

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

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 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

(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) Four staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

- (a) & (b) Eight validated written references were available for the staff members.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members which were obtained within the required 3 years' timeframe.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The staff members working directly with preschool children had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.*
- (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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service. Three staff members cared for 11 preschool children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct.
Three adults (one staff providing AIM support) cared for 11 children. Five children attending a part time service and six children attending a sessional service.
- (8) The registered provider ensured that two adults are present at all times.

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 records of nine pre-school children were reviewed. All records reviewed contained the necessary requirements listed above at (a) to (i).

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) A record in writing was available for review and contained all the necessary requirements as detailed above in (a) to (i) and (j).

Non-Compliance Information

(j) Medication forms completed on the electronic device used by the service did not request a witness to medication signature.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new section has been added to the medication form to include a section for the witness to sign.

A witness always observes and double checks the medication being given. The witness will now sign the adapted form to reflect this practice.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the medication form submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16.

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

Basic Needs of the Children:

- Healthy snacks were provided by parents/guardians for the sessional service, the service provides the second snack which consisted of fruit, crackers and cheese.
- Free movement of the children was facilitated in the daily routine of the day. Short periods of adults-initiated activities were interspersed with free play where children chose their own activity and moved between the different interest areas in the indoor and outdoor areas.
- Children were accompanied to the toilet when required and support was given, additionally children were supported to be independent with toileting and handwashing.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- Relationships between staff and the children were supportive, and consistently positive. Conversations between staff and children about motorbikes, their home life and role play in an ice-cream shop was observed in the outdoor area. Staff were observed to comfort upset children where disagreements or trips/falls had occurred and had discussions with the children about playing nice with their friends and slowing down in the outdoor area.
- Children were supported to engage positively with each other with supported play activities that taught them how to take turns, to listen, to share play resources and be mindful of those around them. Some children were settling into the service and staff used all opportunities to facilitate smooth transitions by signing songs that included introducing themselves to each other and calling children by their name.
- Transitions were clearly announced and signalled by staff. Children were given time to complete activities at their own pace before joining the next activity.

- This approach respected the children’s learning engagements and resulted in a flow in the routine. Where children were observed to not want to take part in a main activity such as story time, they were facilitated to play outdoors at their request.
- Children appeared to be relaxed and happy and staff regularly praised and encouraged the children which supported their self-confidence and self-esteem.

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) A cosy area was available in the room which consisted of a rug and cushions should a child wish to take a rest. Sleep mats with appropriate bedding were available should a child wish to sleep while attending the service.

(3)(a) There was an outdoor area to the back of the service directly accessible from the preschool room which was suitable and secure with an artificial grass surface.

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 room had well defined and supported areas of interest which included library areas beside rest areas, wooden puzzles and building blocks, art and craft materials and montessori equipment. The room was bright and airy, and children had room to work on the tables or the floor if they wished. Children’s artwork was displayed on the walls in a way that respects and acknowledges all the children’s efforts.

The outdoor area was available to the back of the building with an artificial grass surface. Equipment available in the outdoor area included a climbing frame, slide, tyres, benches, a plastic house, ride on toys and a shed with a sand pit with small spades, trucks and diggers.

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

Children take in their morning snack from home which mainly consisted of sandwiches, yogurts, and fruit. Children receive their afternoon snack from the service which on the day inspection consisted of crackers, cheese and fruit. Children had their own drink bottles; additional drinks were available if required.

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:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed with walls and gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

The inspector viewed the following infection control measures undertaken in the service to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children.

- The service was visibly clean and up to date documented cleaning schedules were available.
- Foot-operated pedal waste bins were available in the service which facilitated the hygienic disposal of waste.
- Children's lunches were stored in the fridge to prevent the growth of food poisoning bacteria.
- Children were assisted to wash their hands following outdoor play and before lunch.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Two children's lunches were observed to contain whole grapes, which were not cut up by a staff member. Whole grapes for children pose a choking hazard.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A message has been sent to parents via the electronic app, stating that if grapes are included in children's lunch boxes they must be cut into 4 pieces. Staff will check all lunches and cut grapes or any items that they feel may pose a choking hazard

Children's lunches will be checked, and items cut where necessary.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non compliance in Regulation 23.

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) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

(3) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained.

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 persons had up to date First Aid Responders course and were 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers serviced in October 2023 and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate for 33 preschool children with an expiry date of 27 March 2025