

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH163
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Name of Service:	Sandy's Creche and Montessori
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Address of Service:	Grange End, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 RD28
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Rooney
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Service type:	Full Day
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Dates of Inspection:	29/08/2023
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Date 2 of Inspection:	30/08/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	47
Day 2	AM	53	PM	53

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

Sandy's Creche and Montessori is 1 of 2 childcare facilities operated by the registered provider. The service provides a full day, part time and sessional care and education to children from 0 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE).

The service operates from 07:00 am to 18:30pm Monday to Friday. The service is located in an adapted residential property and consists of 5 care rooms, 2 cot rooms, dining room of the kitchen, staff room and sanitary facilities.

The rooms in the service were as follows:

Downstairs:

The **Baby/Toddler** room facilitates the care of children from 1 to 2 years.

Junior 1 room provides care for children from 1 year 6 months to 2 years 6 months.

Senior Montessori room provides care and education for children from 2 years 10 months to school going age.

Upstairs:

Junior 2 room caters for children from 2 years 6 months to 3 years 6 months.

There are 3 outdoor spaces on the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, deputy manager, 18 childcare staff and 1 cook. Present on both days of inspection were the deputy person in charge, 16 childcare staff, and 1 cook. The registered provider was available if needed.

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 inspections 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.

Additional Information

30/08/2023 An Immediate action notice was issued pertaining to Regulation 9 (2)(c) Management and recruitment as 1 staff member did not have proof of garda vetting on file.

A response was received from the registered provider on the same day and actions taken were accepted by the Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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) 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) Twenty-two validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for 21 staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Eighteen 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) Garda vetting was not available for 1 staff member. An Immediate action notice was issued on the 30/08/2023 and the response received was accepted by the Inspectorate.

(4) Three staff members providing direct care to the children did not have a childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c) This staff member is no longer providing direct care to the children in the service until her Garda vetting is processed. The registered provider and manager will ensure that Garda vetting is sought and on file in the service before any staff member commences employment.

(4) Two Staff members who are in the process of completing their childcare qualification will be supervised at all times while ensuring ratios are maintained. One staff member is no longer working with the pre-school children. The registered provider and manager will ensure that all staff members have a childcare qualification before commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(c) Garda vetting submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

A response was received from the registered provider on the 30/08/23 in relation to staff Garda Vetting and actions taken were accepted by the Inspectorate. The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has adequately addressed the non-compliance for regulation 9 (2)(c).

The inspectors have accepted the assurances that the unqualified staff members are supervised at all times until they have successfully completed appropriate childcare training. All staff working directly with children must hold an appropriate childcare qualification.

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 day 1 of the inspection was the deputy person in charge, 14 childcare staff caring for 48 children in the morning and 14 childcare staff caring for 47 children in the afternoon/evening. One cook was also present. Present on day 2 of the inspection was the deputy person in charge, 13 childcare staff caring for 53 children in the morning with 15 staff caring for 53 children in the afternoon/evening. One cook was also present.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the days of inspection:

Day 1

The **Baby/Toddler** room had 8 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff.

Junior 1 room had 12 children ranging in age from 1 year 6 months to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff.

Senior Montessori room had 19 children ranging in age from 2 years 10 months to school going age being cared for by 5 staff.

Upstairs:

Junior 2 room had 9 children (1 child attended for induction and left service at 11am) ranging in age from 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 3 staff members with 1 additional staff member providing cover for a staff member who finished working at 1 pm in the afternoon/evening.

Day 2

The **Baby/Toddler** had 8 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff .

Junior 1 room had 14 children ranging in age from 1 year 6 months to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff.

Senior Montessori room had 20 children ranging in age from 2 years 10 months to school going age being cared for by 5 staff with 1 additional staff member providing cover for the afternoon.

Upstairs:

Junior 2 room had 11 children ranging in age from 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members with 1 additional staff member providing cover for a staff member who finished working at 1 pm in the afternoon/evening.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) On the 29/8/2023 on arrival to the service the staff roster did not reflect the staff present in the service. Staff members rostered to work were not all included on the roster.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff members rostered to work are now included on the daily roster. The registered provider and manager will ensure that the staff roster reflects the staff working on a daily basis in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

On day 2 of the inspection the staff roster reflected the staff present in the service. Further staff rosters submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 16 1 (i). The response received has been accepted.

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 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:

- The staff members in all care rooms were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their play activities. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones when engaging with the children and showed a keen interest in what each child was doing.
- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. In the Baby /Toddler room and Junior 1 rooms children who were settling into the service and when upset were picked up and nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Older children 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.
- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- A written record was kept in the Baby/Toddler room 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 when collecting their child at the end of the day.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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 and cushions were available if a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Children over 2 years were accommodated to sleep on stackable beds in the Junior 1 room. Two cot rooms were available for the children under 2 years with a total of 14 standard cots. A sleep log to record 10-minute sleep checks was maintained to monitor the children while asleep.

(3)(a) There were 3 outdoor spaces. The Baby/ Toddler room, Junior 1 room and the Senior Montessori room had large outdoor spaces off their rooms enclosed by fencing with an artificial grass surface. These spaces were also used by the Junior 2 room. Both spaces had partially sheltered areas, permitting outdoor play in all types of weather.

A large, enclosed grass and gravel area was located to the side of the building. This area was not in use on the days of inspection due to maintenance work being completed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) In the Junior 2 room upstairs at 2 pm children were having rest time on a large, padded sheet with a long cylinder head support attached. Three children over 2 years were asleep and were not transferred to a suitable stackable bed or a mat which would provide safety, support and comfort.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) Stackable beds are now available for children who may fall asleep at rest time. The registered provider and manager have informed all staff that if a child falls asleep that they must be transferred to a bed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of stackable beds available.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 20 1 (b). The response received has been accepted.

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

- All 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.
- Equipment in both areas included toy cars, ride on toys, rockers, climbing tunnel, plastic activity unit with a slide and swing, wooden benches and building blocks, push/pull and ride on cars and trikes, a large wooden play kitchen, sand and water trays and number of climbing frames and slides.

A large grass and gravel area which was not in use on the day of inspection was suitable to the older age group. Equipment included a wooden frame saucer swing, mud kitchen, gutters mounted to the wall for pouring activities, wooden activity unit with 2 slides and a climbing ramp, sand pit and a wooden playhouse.

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 2-week menu plan with a selection of meals ranging from meat, poultry and fish along with a variety of snacks. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis, breakfast was available from 7am to 9:30am consisting of a choice of cereals and toast. A fruit snack was served at 10:30am with the main meal of the day minced stew and potatoes served between 11:30am and 12:30pm. Evening tea of rice pudding was served between 3pm to 4pm before leaving for home. The Senior Montessori and Junior 2 room bring their own afternoon snacks. Water was the drink of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care rooms.

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 with a buzzer system and the outdoor space were enclosed and secured. 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 following infection control measures were observed:

- Liquid soap, paper hand towel and warm water not exceeding 43⁰ C was available at the sinks in the sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.
- In the Baby/Toddler room children's pacifiers were stored in individual boxes.
- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the refrigeration of perishable items.

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 20⁰ C and between 18 to 22⁰ C in the Junior 1 room while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log on each child recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on children asleep in the cot rooms and in the Junior 1 room.

- Black out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Risk assessments for the outdoor area for the Baby/ Toddler room and Junior 1 room were not completed since 20/6/2023.

Safe Sleep:

2. No sleep log was maintained on the 3 children who fell asleep in the Junior 2 room upstairs.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Risk assessments in the outdoor area are now conducted on a regular basis. A staff member has been allocated to conduct the risk assessment.

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Safe Sleep:

All children who fall asleep will be monitored on a 10-minute basis which will be recorded on a sleep log. The registered provider and manager will monitor this practice.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Risk assessments completed

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs completed

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23 General Safety and Safe Sleep. The response received has been 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 in

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment were last serviced on the 14th August 2023.

(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 ensured that the service was adequately insured for 70 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2023 to the 27th March 2024.