

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH191
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Name of Service:	The Childrens House
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Address of Service:	Chestnut Grove, Beaufort Place, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 K524
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Caldwell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

The Childrens House is in a 2-storey stand-alone building in a residential housing estate in Navan. The service is owner occupied and in operation since September 2010. Children in the age range 2 to 6 years are cared for on a sessional basis. An entrance hallway, office, playroom, staff room, kitchen and sanitary accommodation for both children and adults are located at ground floor level. Two playrooms, an open area to hang coats, a storeroom and children's sanitary accommodation are located at first floor level. Parking is provided at the side of the premises and an outdoor play area located at the back of the premises.

Staffing

There are eight staff members which includes the registered provider.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

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.

Eight staff files were reviewed.

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

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct;

Morning Playschool Room: Three staff members cared for 18 children attending a sessional (aged between 2 years 11 months to 3 years 9 months).

Morning Montessori One: Two staff members cared for 13 children attending a sessional service (aged between 3 years 10 months to 4 years 10 months).

Morning Montessori Two: Two staff members cared for 8 children attending a sessional service (aged 3 years to 4 years).

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,

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. The staff members were observed to be caring and attentive in their interactions with the children, responding meaningfully to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues and providing praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other and this was particularly evidenced by the positive regard shown by the children and staff members towards children with additional communication needs in the service.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance if required.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- The service was warm and welcoming on arrival. Relationships between staff and the children were very supportive, warm, and consistently positive. Staff sat at the child's level while assisting them with activities. Staff were overheard praising children for sharing toys and supported children to find positive solutions.
- There was lots of evidence of themes during the month such as thanksgiving and fire safety with artwork and materials to support the themes.

- Staff when interacting with the children continuously name everything throughout the morning which helps the children make a connection from the thing to the word which helps build vocabulary concentration and memory.

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.

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.

Compliance Information

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

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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly last recorded fire drill was the 21st November 2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers serviced on the 4th September 2024 and smoke alarms serviced on the 8th November 2024 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 ensured that the service was adequately insured for 55 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.