

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN006
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks
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Address of Service:	Corduff/Raferagh Community Centre, Corduff, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 A263
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Muldoon
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Road Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Bright Sparks has been operating as a community-based childcare service since 2002. The service provides a part time and sessional service to pre-school children aged 2 - 6 years. The service operates from 8am – 2.30pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from the top floor in the local community centre in Corduff Co. Monaghan. The service has 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a separate kitchen are also provided in the service. The children have access to the outdoor play area of the adjacent primary school.

Staffing

There were 7 staff employed in the service, 6 employed to work directly with the children and 1 who was employed as the 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. 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 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required.

There were 7 staff files presented for inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 6 members of staff.
- One staff member had 1 written and validated reference.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 staff members however the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years as specified in Regulation 23 below.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that all 6 members of staff who worked directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) One staff member did not have a second written and validated reference.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented and available on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not available for the 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) The registered provider obtained a second reference for the staff member and it has been checked and validated by the manager. The registered provider will ensure all references are sought and checked before new staff start in their role.

(d) International police vetting was obtained for the staff member.

The registered provider will ensure that staff members have police vetting before they start their role if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of validated written reference and international police vetting.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation and is satisfied the non-compliances have been addressed.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly at all times with the children attending the early years' service.
- (2) When the inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection, the adult to child ratios were correct. The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection. In the Preschool Room there were 15 children aged between 3 – 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- (8) The registered provider ensured that 2 staff members were 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 following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children had free movement in the care room and due to the inclement weather conditions on the day they were unable to access the outdoor area. The hall downstairs was also unavailable to the children due to being set up for a community event however, alternative activities were carried out with the children in the care room.
- Lunches were brought in by the children and stored appropriately in the fridge which consisted of fruit, yoghurts, crackers, carrots, sandwiches and wheaten bread. The children had access to their drinks. Each child had a placemat with their picture and name on it. Assistance was given to children to open food products. The children were afforded plenty of time to finish their food and staff sat with the children while they were eating and had their lunches too. A late lunch menu was available for any of the children who stayed on to 1.50pm which was served at approximately 1pm. Lunch consisted of some waffles and chicken nuggets.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required as the children were brought out to the sanitary accommodation outside the care room. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting and supervision provided.

Supporting relationship around children

- The staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff members for example "would anyone like help?", "are you ok?" and "thank you all so much". The children were observed to actively seek out staff members and have conversations with them. The staff were observed to play down at the children's level, providing and encouraging age-appropriate activities and

conversations. Encouraging words and conversations about tractors were observed during nappy changing time.

- A key worker system was in operation in the room.
- Transitions between activities were smooth and minor behavioural issues were dealt with swiftly and did not escalate.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informally at drop off and pick-up and there was also information available in the corridor on the way in.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the room and accessible to the children on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were defined interest areas in the care room which were supported with toys and equipment.

Programme Of Activities.

- In the Preschool Room evidence of planning was available and a story telling activity was observed to link in with the weekly theme “Inclusion”.
- The service had a “Star Helper” for the day system which the children were observed to eagerly partake in. Children were given jobs like turning off the lights for lunchtime, be the leader of the day or to go round and help check at tidy up time.
- Children’s free painting artwork was on display.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate was not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service in relation to the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was reviewed for the 7 staff members and 2 of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing mat in the sanitary accommodation was torn and foam exposed. This is an infection control and cross contamination risk.
3. The nappy bin in the sanitary accommodation was not adequate as it was a hand operated nappy bin and therefore an infection control risk. A lidded, lined pedal operation bin is required.
4. The corners of the small triangular seat in the care were in disrepair and did not allow for effective cleaning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The 2 staff members have their renewed vetting. This will be checked on a regular basis to ensure that all Garda vetting are within the 3 years' time frame.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing mat was replaced straight after the inspection. The mat will be inspected regularly and any tear, it will be replaced.
3. The nappy bin was replaced immediately with a pedal bin. To ensure that all regulations are kept up to date in regard to the health and safety of the children and staff.
4. The triangular seat was removed and then taped with strong tape to patch up the holes and if they reoccur, it will be removed immediately and replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copies of updated Garda vetting x 2.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting documentation has been reviewed by the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate is satisfied that the non-compliances have been addressed in Regulation 23.

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) On review of the documentation and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates available, there were 2 certificates available and a person trained with FAR was available at all times.

(2)(a) and (b) There was a first aid box available in the service which was accessible to the children at all times.

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, the last recorded 16/10/24.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarm system dated 11/23 and 23/5/24 respectively.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were 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

There was adequate insurance cover in place to cover up to a maximum of 38 children which expires on the 27/3/25.