

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN011
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Name of Service:	Carrickmacross Preschool Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Catholic Hall, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 DV22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rosemary McEnaney
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 2nd Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	Joanna O'Byrne & Deirdre Duffy
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager

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 operates from the basement floor of the church hall in the town centre. There are two care rooms in the service, the Junior Pre-school room and the Senior Pre-school room. There are toilets off each playroom. Additionally, there is a kitchen off the Junior Pre-School room and an office off the Senior Pre-School room. An outdoor area runs along the front of the two care rooms.

Staffing

The registered provider and four staff members were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The service also employed three other staff members who were on leave on the day of inspection.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment; Regulation 11 Staffing Levels; Regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child; Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child; Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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(s) wish 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and had two named deputy designated persons in charge. The registered provider was on the premises throughout the day of inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service identifying the roles and responsibilities of staff members.

Following a review of the staff files of the seven staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider, the following documentation was available:

(2)(a) Nine verified references from previous employers.

(b) Five verified references from other sources.

(c) Seven garda vetting disclosures.

(d) Two international police vetting disclosures for the two members of staff who had lived outside of the state for more than six months.

(4) Evidence was available that the seven staff members held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework; these included two Level 8 awards, three Level 7 awards, two Level 6 awards and two level 5 awards.

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) At all times throughout the day of inspection there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum adult: child ratio was maintained at all times throughout the day of inspection. Two staff members worked in the Junior Preschool Room with 13 children and two staff members worked in the Senior Preschool Room with 14 children. The registered provider provided additional support in both rooms during the day.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff members 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

(i) There was no daily staff roster available on the day of inspection.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider sent photographic evidence to the inspectorate of a staff roster the following day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider developed a weekly staff roster and sent photographic evidence of it to the inspectorate the day after the inspection took place.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider has added a weekly staff roster to the weekly documents to be developed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the registered provider have provided assurances to the Inspectorate that the non-compliances have been addressed. Therefore, the requirements of the regulation are met.

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

The service demonstrated an eagerness to get to know the children as individuals which supported their sense of belonging in the service. A 'Children's Interest' board was displayed in the care rooms with quotes from the children about what they enjoy doing. The children participated in a group activity whereby they all got the opportunity to explain what they enjoyed playing with that morning. Children's artwork was displayed on the walls.

The staff members displayed sensitivity and a caring attitude towards the children. This was observed on a number of occasions throughout the inspection: when a child tripped in the care room, a staff members gently comforted them; when a child asked when their parent would be coming, a staff member reassured the them by explaining the plan for the morning and when the parent would be coming; when two children wanted to use the same equipment outdoors, a staff member provided a timer to support them independently manage turn taking. Transitions were managed successfully through the use of songs and timers.

Both care rooms were well resourced with a number of interest areas, which the children could choose from. These included a sand tray, a water trough, modelling clay, an easel with paint, dress-up clothes, a book corner, construction bricks, a home area and train sets. The materials were well maintained and accessible, and the children were observed to be happily playing with equipment and moving freely between activities.

The service demonstrated a number of systems to communicate with the parents/guardians about their child's day. Each child has their own scrap book with quotes, photographs and artwork by the child. These scrap books are sent home at different points in the year for parents to look through and comment on. The service also sends photographs to a parent's messaging group with updates of the activities that the children engaged in.

Staff in the service explained the different local community outings which they go on through the year, which include walks to see festive decorations and to the local primary schools before the children transition to school. Staff also discussed the different activities such as orange peeling and buttering toast, which are run to support the children develop independence.

The children bring a packed lunch to the service. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a nutritionally balanced lunch. During mealtime, staff supported the children and encouraged independence.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was no drinking water available and accessible to the children throughout the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the registered provider sent photographic evidence to the inspectorate the following day of water stations that had been set up, which were in the care rooms and at the children's height.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider set up water stations in the care rooms that were accessible to the children and sent photographic evidence to the inspectorate the day after the inspection took place.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider has stated that setting up water stations has been added to their list of daily tasks.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the registered provider have provided assurances to the Inspectorate that the non-compliances have been addressed. Therefore, the requirements of the regulation are met.

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 service's emergency exits were unobstructed. There was a secure entrance into both of the care rooms. The windows were securely closed and unopenable by the children.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Cleaning and hazardous agents were securely stored out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play and before mealtime. Sinks were at the children's height with warm water, soap and hand towels available. A staff member supervised the children washing their hands, a step-by-step photograph prompt was displayed.

The children's packed lunches were stored in a fridge in the kitchen and taken out at mealtime. The tables were wiped down before the children ate.

The care rooms and toilets were well ventilated and maintained. Pedal operated bins were used throughout the service.

Fire Safety:

Staff members were able to explain the procedures to be followed in a fire drill.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area, a wooden gate at the bottom of a metal staircase which led up to a room of the premises which was used by an organisation other than the early years service was open and accessible to the children, as the lock was broken. This presented a risk to the children as they could have become injured on the staircase or have gained entry into the room, if the door was unlocked.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider sent photographic evidence of a padlock on the gate to the inspectorate the day following the inspection.

2. On reviewing the Accident and Incident Form book, not all report sheets were signed by adults working in the service, parents and dated. The copy of the report had not always been given to the parent/guardian of the child. This presented a risk to the children if the information was not accurately and fully communicated.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Wooden Gate

The registered provider bought and fitted a new lock for the gate and sent photographic evidence to the inspectorate the day after the inspection took place.

The registered provider has stated that a statement to assess the gate has been added to a checklist on the daily outdoor risk assessment.

Accident and Incident Forms

The registered provider has stated that staff training took place to ensure that all staff are aware of how to complete the forms accurately.

The registered provider has stated that the room leaders will review the books to ensure that the forms are completed correctly.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the registered provider have provided assurances to the Inspectorate that the non-compliances have been addressed. Therefore, the requirements of the regulation are met.

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 of monthly fire drill was kept in the premises.
- (b) Maintenance records of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available and kept up to date in the premises.
- (4) Details of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed by the door in both care rooms.