

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN021				
Name of Service:	Doohamlet Childcare Ltd				
Address of Service:	Doohamlet N.S, Doohamlet, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan				
Eircode:	A75 YV07				
Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Duffy				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	02/09/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>17</td> <td>PM</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table>	AM	17	PM	10
AM	17	PM	10		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan				
Inspection undertaken by:	S.Skinnader				
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

Doohamlet Childcare Ltd is a community run non-profit service in operation since 2011. The service provides full day-care, part-time care and sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years of age and caters for a maximum of 22 children. The service operates Monday - Friday from 8am – 6pm. The service is located in a purpose-built building adjoining the local primary school in the village of Doohamlet Co. Monaghan. The service consists of 1 preschool care room, a school age room with kitchen area and sanitary accommodation. There is an enclosed outdoor area to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

There are 5 staff members employed in the service, 4 of whom including the person in charge work directly with the preschool children. The 5th is employed to work with school age children and also works in the kitchen.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 25, 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulations 16(1) and 23. 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 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, 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. On the day of the inspection the person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived at the premises and was present throughout the inspection.

Five staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) There were two written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 4 staff members.

Two written references were available for 1 staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 5 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as from the documentary evidence available international police vetting was not required as none of the staff had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 4 staff members working directly with the preschool children had a childcare qualification which met the minimum qualification required to enable them to work directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two written references were not validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Going forward, when a new member of staff is employed by Doohamlet Childcare Ltd, the person in charge will ensure that references will be validated before staff member can commence work.

Following on from inspection, person in charge contacted the two referees of the staff member to verify the references.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of references.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The non-compliance has 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 inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection, the adult to child ratios were correct.

The following adult to child ratios were observed on arrival of the inspectors on the day of inspection:

In the Preschool Room there were 17 children aged between 3 to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members.

A 3rd member of staff arrived to commence kitchen duties at 11.45am and a 4th staff member arrived at 1pm and worked directly with the children.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times as confirmed by the staff members and confirmation of their shifts.

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 current staff rota available, documenting the staff on duty. The rota available was from the previous academic year and not dated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following on from inspection, the rota was changed to reflect staff attendance and absence.

The childcare staff rota has been changed and is displayed on a weekly basis, to reflect staff attendances/ absences. Rota is updated every Friday going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of a weekly staff rota.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

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

There was 1 care room in operation on the day of the inspection - the Preschool Room.

(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 who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.
- A nose blowing station was available in the room and the children were encouraged to use it independently.
- The service had a weekly menu and a homemade dinner consisting of hot dogs and wedges was served to the children staying on a full day care and part-time basis. Staff were observed to sit with the children at mealtimes and this time was used to encourage conversations between the children. Consistency of the dinners were observed to be age appropriate.
- The children had access to their drinks at all times and had free movement in the care room.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key person system was in place in the service with both staff members allocated a group of children. The key person took the lead in supporting that groups transitions, recording their daily activities, maintaining relationships with their families, and documenting their learning and development.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informally at drop off and pick-up. The staff also confirmed that emails were used to communicate with and to share information with parents.
- The staff members in the service 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 member for example thank you” “well done..... great sharing”. The children were observed to seek out the staff for assistance and one child who became upset was comforted by the staff member in the cosy area.
- The staff promoted the children’s independence in the preschool room, by allowing the children to tidy up the toys they used and by allowing them to get their own lunches and drinks out of their bags.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were resourced defined interest areas such as the home corner, messy area with sand, water trays and art supplies, role play area and a construction/work bench area.
- There was a soft comfortable area consisting of a plastic sofa area and floor mat and 10 plastic covered floor cushions.

Programme Of Activities.

- Evidence of long and short-term planning schedules were on display outside the room and staff advised that scrapbooks would be commenced on each child as the year progressed with observations and samples of artwork so that parents could see some of the activities that the children engaged in during their day at preschool.
- Transitions between activities and care practices were smooth.

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

General Safety:

1. The blind cords on the emergency fire exit out to the outdoor area were not restricted and within access of the children. This is a health and safety risk.
2. Perishable food items brought in by the children for their lunches were not stored in the fridge instead remained in their school bags. This is a health risk.
3. The corners on part of the plastic covered sofa in the cosy area were worn and in need of repair.

Infection Control:

4. The nappy changing mat in the sanitary accommodation was torn, in a state of disrepair and required replacing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Blind cord hook has been put in place to prevent cord hanging. Blind cord hooks have been erected on the back emergency fire exit, and cords have been secured, therefore this will prevent blind core hanging loosely in future.
2. All perishable foods are removed from children's bags on arrival to preschool each morning and placed in the fridge. All staff members will remove perishable foods from children's bags on arrival into preschool each morning and place into the fridge, clearly labelled with each child's name.
3. Corner of soft sofa has been repaired with leather patches. Soft seating will be checked regularly and if any wear and tear appears, this will be repaired immediately.

Infection Control:

4. Nappy changing mat has been replaced. New nappy changing mat has been purchased. A spare changing mat will be left in storage that if a rip was to appear, the mat can be replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the actions taken.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The non-compliances have been addressed.

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

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On review of the documentation and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates available, there was not a person trained with FAR available at all times. FAR certs available expired on the 6/6/24. It is acknowledged that the staff had commenced renewal of their FAR training and the final day was scheduled for 4/9/24.

(2) There were no eye pads in the first aid box.

Opened tubes of medicinal creams were stored in the first aid box with dressings and these are a potential contamination risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All staff members have completed their FAR Training as of 4th September 2024. Staff had already completed part of their training prior to inspection, however the last day had been cancelled due to the trainer being ill. FAR Training will be booked well in advance to the expiry date of current certificates to ensure that we always have FAR trained staff in service at all times.

2. Eye pads have been purchased and are now added to the first aid bag. Continue monthly checks of First Aid bag to ensure that all essentials on the checklist are available to us at all times.
3. Opened tubes have been placed in a zip lock bag in the first aid bag. We will always keep creams in a zip lock bag when they have been opened, before placing into the first aid bag.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector is satisfied with the registered provider's response. The non-compliances have been addressed.

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 22 children which expires on the 9/7/25.