

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO016
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Name of Service:	Bangor Childrens Centre
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Address of Service:	Church Road, Bangor-Erris, Ballina, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F26 VC58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Amanda Carabine
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Bangor Childrens Centre is registered to provide sessional services from 09:15-12:15hours to children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service is located in a purpose-built building beside a primary school in Bangor, Co Mayo. There is one large playroom, a kitchen, office and sanitary facilities in the service. The children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas to the front, rear and sides of the building.

Staffing

At the time of the inspection there were four staff members working directly with the children in the service. A fifth adult was employed through a community employment scheme in the service. The service also had a relief staff member available to provide relief cover when required.

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, 23, 25, 27 and 28. 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) There was a designated person in charge in the service and a named person to deputise in the event of her absence.
- (b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy were present in the service during the inspection.

(2)

The designated person in charge confirmed with the inspector that there was four new members of staff in the service since the most recent inspection of 8 October 2021. The vetting files for the other two staff members in the service had been reviewed during previous inspections. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the four new staff:

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular the most recent employers for two staff. One written validated reference from their most recent employer for one staff.

(b) A total of three written validated references from sources other than past employers for two staff members.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for four staff.

(4)

Evidence was available on file to show that the qualifications for two of the staff who worked directly with the children new to the service since the last inspection met the requirements of the regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d)

1. An international child protection certificate was required for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for longer than 6 months as an adult.
2. There were no international police vetting documents available for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for more than six months as an adult.

(4)

The information available for review on file in relation to qualifications for two staff members did not demonstrate that their qualifications were equivalent to at least Level 5 in Early childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(d)

1. International police vetting has been obtained for the adult.
2. The staff member has applied for international Child Protection Certificate and is awaiting issuing of the certificate. The service will ensure in the future that all International Police Certificates are obtained prior to staff commencing employment.

(4)

One staff member no longer works in the service. The other staff member will not be working directly with children in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The service submitted a copy of international police vetting for one staff member and a copy of an international child protection certificate for another staff member.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the service have been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and have been deemed to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found under this regulation on inspection.

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) An adequate number of adults worked at all times with the 17 children present in the service during the inspection.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of children attending the service was adhered to with two staff with evidence of the appropriate qualifications working directly with 17 children on the day of the 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

During the inspection the children spent most of their time playing outdoors in the different play areas. For example, shortly after the inspector's arrival the children played outside on ride on toys, rocker toys and a slide and made structures out of plastic blocks at the front of the building. Circle time was held outside where the staff and children made a circle singing songs and discussed the season of Autumn.

The staff prompted the children to put on their coats and wellingtons boots by themselves if they could helping promote their independence and self-help skills before playing outdoors. Help was given to children by the staff to put on clothes and boots where needed. The staff informed the inspector that protective rainwear was provided by the service for the children to wear in bad weather to maximise outdoor playing time for children.

The outdoor area was well developed with a large outdoor shelter facilitating play during inclement weather to the rear of the premises. The children played in this area after their lunch rolling plastic balls on an activity wall that had been attached to the shelter's wall. Some of the children played in "Bridget's fairy garden" that was a recent addition to the outdoor space. The fairy garden was a sheltered area with artificial grass and a brightly painted mural painted on one wall. Miniature "fairy houses" were kept on low wooden shelving and the ground of one corner had been covered with small white pebbles and stones.

At the beginning of the session, the children enjoyed activities indoors with wide varieties of play equipment available to them in the playroom. The play materials and equipment were grouped in interest areas for example a home corner, doll area, messy play area with sandbox beside the art and craft area that had large amounts of craft supplies in labelled boxes and an art easel set up for use with paints, brushes and paper. If children wished to rest, there was a rest area with soft seating beside the book area that held a selection of age-appropriate books. Tabletop activities to develop fine motor skills such as pegboards, threading games and wooden blocks were stored in open, low level storage allowing children to choose their play activities and replace them after use.

Interactions between the staff and children were observed to be warm with the staff using positive language when talking with the children. Staff members used gentle tones to guide children to take care of each other when playing with equipment outside. The staff told the inspector that there was a key worker system in place to help form and develop secure relationships between staff and the children and that the parents were made aware of their child's keyworker. The keyworkers kept written/photographic journals for each child containing photographs and information of the children relating to different activities that they had experienced in the service with samples available for review by the inspector. The designated person in charge told the inspector that plans were in place for parents to come to the service after the Halloween break to look at the journals and discuss their child's progress with the staff. Transitions were helped to go smoothly by the staff preparing the children in advance for upcoming changes from one activity to the next. The designated person in charge told the inspector that some parents of the children new to the service in September had initially stayed with their child where needed to help them settle in. An introduction pack with written service information was given to parents when their child started with the parents shown around the service by the staff. Electronic applications were used to help communicate service information to the children's parents. The staff were observed to speak with parents/guardians at the gate when they came to collect their children. The service was integrated into the local community with the children taking part in the local St Patrick's day parade earlier in the year and visits to the service by local gardai.

The service followed the HighScope approach to early learning with a photographic display of their planned daily routine and activities on show in the playroom. Lunch was provided by the service from a local catering business with the children having a choice of sandwiches previously agreed with parents and chopped fruit which were apples and bananas on the day. The children and staff sat in groups at tables for lunch and chatted to each other. Plastic plates were provided for the children to eat from with drinks of water provided.

The children were supported to use the toilet by themselves when they needed to with help given by staff where needed. Boxes of tissues were available at low levels inside in the playroom and on a low-level window ledge when playing outdoors for children to clean their noses if they needed to. There were changes of clothing kept for children in the service and one child was helped change clothes that were wet by a staff member.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) When the children returned indoors to eat lunch following outdoor play, they lined up to wash their hands at a sink in the playroom. All the children had liquid soap squirted on their hands by an adult rather than being supported to do so by themselves. Some of the children had difficulty reaching the taps resulting in the staff putting water on to their hands rather than children being encouraged and enabled to wash their own hands at the sink.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a)
- All staff have been made aware that children have to be encouraged to wash their own hands. The staff have implemented that all the children will put their own soap onto their hands and the children that are unable to reach the taps in the playroom sink are now encouraged to use the hand basin in the toilets to wash their hands.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and deemed to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

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 main entrance door to the service was secured when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The inspector was admitted to the service by the designated person in charge following production of identification documentation. The gate to the enclosed outdoor play area was secured when the children were playing outside. The toys and play equipment were kept in good condition and were suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them.

There was a securing device out of reach of the children on the kitchen door allowing the staff to restrict access by the children to the area. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

Warm water controlled under 43°C., liquid soap and paper towels were used for washing children's hands with foot pedal operated bins used to dispose of wastepaper towels. The staff cleaned down surfaces after use for example the tables after lunch time. Written records were kept of cleaning and disinfecting procedures in the service with cleaning schedules to guide practice available in the playroom. Windows were opened to ventilate the playroom whilst keeping the room air temperature between the required temperature range of 18-22°C.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication administered to a child in the service during the inspection. A medication administration book was provided to provide and record details if medicine was needed to be administered to a child by staff.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes and doors were observed by the inspector to be unobstructed during the inspection.

Outing:

The staff told the inspector that outings were not undertaken by the service at the time of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- A rodent bait box with the lid open on the box was accessible to children in the grass section of the outdoor area to the rear of the building posing a safety risk to children using the area. It is acknowledged that the rodent bait box was removed when the risk was alerted to the staff by the inspector.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The rodent bait box has been removed and placed to the back of the shed. Secured wire placed across the opening to the shed to ensure the children will not have access to it.

Summary Comment

The regulatory non-compliance has been addressed by the action submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the service.

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) Certification of first aid training for children in respect of four staff with expiry dates from the 11 January 2025 to the 14 May 2025 were available in the service.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were stored in an easily locatable position a high shelf in the playroom.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available during the session if a child required treatment.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The required adult: child ratios were adhered to in the service. Staff members supervised the children appropriately mainly by sight during the inspection. The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were out of sight of the staff when using the toilet but remained within earshot if help was needed to be given. The staff sat with the children when supervising them eating their lunches. When playing outdoors the children were observed by sight by the staff who positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor spaces to be able to see them.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider had adequate insurance in place for sessional services expiring on 27 March 2024 covering the maximum number of 22 children per session that the service can accommodate.