

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY002
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Name of Service:	Daingean Community Childcare Services Ltd
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Address of Service:	St. Mary's Road, Daingean, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 Y138
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Henry
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	41
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Molloy.
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 service is a community-based full day care service which is operated by Daingean Community Childcare Ltd. It is located in the village of Daingean, in rural Co. Offaly. The service has been operating since 1998. The service is registered to cater for children aged 0 to 6 years and can accommodate up to 107 pre-school children. The service operates between 07.00am and 6.00pm. Four sessional services operate between 9.00am and 12.0pm, and from 12.30pm-3.30pm Monday to Friday. A school aged service is also in operation in the service.

The service was purpose built by the community, is a single-story building, located on its own site next door to the local church. Car parking and set down is possible in a designated area outside the premises and on the public road. Enclosed secure outdoor play areas are located to the front, side and back of the premises and are accessed directly from the service. An open plan reception area staff area, hallway, cloakroom area, office, storeroom, kitchen, eight toilets and wash hand basins three sleep rooms, and four nappy changing facilities.

The service consists of the baby room with access to its own nappy changing room, sleep room and kitchenette. This room accommodated infants up to one year. The wobbler room also had access to its own nappy changing room, sleep room and kitchenette and accommodated children aged from one to two years. The Toddler room which accommodated children aged between two years to two years six months, children in this room have use of another designated sleeping room. The service also had four other play rooms which accommodated children from two years six months to five years availing of both sessional and full day care.

Staffing

There are 28 staff employed in the service including the person in charge, two designated cooks and administration staff. Qualifications of staff range from level 6 -8 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. The registered provider was part of the staff compliment. Fourteen staff were working directly with the preschool children in the morning and twelve were taking care of them in the afternoon, in addition to the person in charge.

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 the child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 and regulation 19 and regulation 23 .

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the baby playroom, nappy changing and sanitary accommodations and the outdoor play areas.

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
- (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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(5) Paragraph (4) shall apply-

- (a) on or after 31 December 2016 in respect of pre-school services registered on or before 30 June 2016, and
- (b) on or after the date of registration in respect of all other pre-school services.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider who is the designated person in charge was present during and facilitated the inspection. The roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

The person in charge stated that no new staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection. All staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.

(a) (b) Validated references from all staff members’ past employers, in particular the most recent employer, and validated references from reputable sources were available for review for all staff as required.

(c) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all-staff member was available for review.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was required for three staff member and this was available for inspection. .

(3)
Required vetting had been carried out prior to all staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)
All employees held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)(b)
Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)
Three staff members were working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day of 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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-
(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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)
The required ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children. Records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld in the service.
- (4)
(b) The required ratio of adults to children was observed during the inspection and records showed that the sufficient adults were rostered to work with the children each day.
- (8)
(a)
The person in charge had ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- The registered provider had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by
- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
 - (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
 - (c) an authorised person.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

Healthy eating was promoted, in line with the health eating policy and a healthy nutritious diet was provided. A two-week menu was in place and all food was freshly prepared on site by the designated cooks. The service offered breakfast, morning snack, dinner, mid-afternoon snack, and tea. The main meal of the day was pasta bolognese with fresh fruit and milk and water. Tea was a selection of toasted sandwiches and yogurts.

Babies who were on formula milk had their bottles stored correctly. Babies were nurtured, correctly held and bottle fed with warmth, care and professional love.

Nappies were changed as required and nappy changing was observed to be interactive and a pleasant experience for the infants.

Children were supported to become independent and self-caring and were encouraged to take care of their own belongings including hanging up their coats and opening bags and lunch boxes and tidying up their toys when finished playing.

Children who were toilet training were patiently encouragement and positive reinforcement and was offered by staff.

Children were offered choice throughout their time in the service, and it was noted that they move freely indoors and outdoors, and some children chose to relax in the cosy corners.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

It was observed that the children appeared comfortable in the company of staff and a warm relaxed atmosphere was noted.

Staff remained constant, with the same staff in the service each day and this consistency created continuity of care and provided opportunity for children to form relationships with the staff.

Parents involvement was encouraged, and parents had opportunity to meet with staff each day at hand over time and could come into the service and avail of individual meetings to discuss their own children's progress.

Transitions from preschool to primary school were supported as towards the end of the year the children discussed their plans to move to their new school and become familiar with the idea and a visit from local teacher was arranged.

Children who needed additional help and support were given this by staff who helped children with their social skills.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages, and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and outdoors in the three enclosed outdoor play facilities. The play areas could be accessed directly from the play rooms and children were observed choosing to go outdoors as they wished.

(b)

A cosy rest area was available in each room. All sleeping rooms were furnished with cots and low beds available for the older children.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play facility was secured by perimeter fencing and could be accessed directly from the play rooms.

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 entry to the service was secured so as to ensure the safety of the children within and the main door was operated on a controlled entry system from inside at the reception desk. The outdoor play area was securely fenced and secured with gates that were locked from within. A high stone wall was in place around the perimeters.

The oil-fired heating system was professionally maintained and checked annually. Records showed that the last serviced was on February 2, 2023.

All cleaning, sanitising products and equipment were stored in safe place out of reach of children.

A pest control system was in place to safe guard against pests.

Infection Control:

Wash hand basins were provided with thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated pedal bins.

Children were observed washing their hands regularly and were assisted if required.

Staff were familiar with the infection control policy of the service.

The service was clean, and staff were observed surface cleaning during the inspection. The setting was well ventilated with openable windows and air purifier system which allowed air flow and air exchange.

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medication policy was available in the service which was reviewed annually.

Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

Three designated sleeping rooms were provided for children's use which was restfully decorated and had black out window curtains. Temperature was controlled in the rooms and sleep rooms were appropriately ventilated.

Staff were aware of best sleep practices, and were observed physically monitored sleeping children, carrying out and recorded sleeping checks.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed and clearly marked.

A notice showing fire assembly point at the back of the service was on display .

Outing:

The registered provider stated that no outings were undertaken from the setting

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)
Staff had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)(b)

The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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 was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on 18 June 2023 .

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced on April 13, 2023, the firefighting equipment was checked in April 2023.

(2)

The record was available and open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.

(3)

The person in charge stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. was available in the service. The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to all information as was required for completion of the inspection