

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN004
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Name of Service:	Brightsparks Preschool
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Address of Service:	Lisacul, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F45 VY24
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carol Conlon
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date 1 of Inspection:	17/05/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	22/05/2024
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No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	8	PM	17
Day 2	AM	20	PM	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
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

This parttime service is within close proximity of the village of Lisacul, Co. Roscommon. The service is registered to cater for children on a part time basis from 8:30hrs to 13:30hrs, and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care pre-school programmes are offered. The service caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 33 pre-school children, at any one time. There are two interconnected playrooms. There is a designated kitchenette where the children's snacks and lunches are stored. Two designated quiet rest area with child size couches and beanbags are available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There is an outdoor play area to the side of the premises for children's fresh air, exploration, and play.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. Four staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 6 to 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a designated business manager employed in the service.

Methodology [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 with ten of the children's records assessed.

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 deputy person in charge on day one of the inspection and the person in charge on day two, the staff and children who were present during 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 and there was a named person available to deputize in the service.

(b) The deputy person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived on day one of the inspection and the designated person in charge was on the premises on day two and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

(2)(a) & (b) There were five staff employed in the service and all staff files were reviewed.

Ten of the ten written validated references on file in respect of the five staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the five staff. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that two staff, had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.

(4) The four staff working directly with the pre-school children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 6 to Level 7 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of Day 1 of the inspection, there were 8 children present. All children were aged between 3 to 4 years. There were two staff directly caring for these children.
- Ten children from the Butterfly room were on an outing with the local primary school children and returned to the service at 12md with two staff directly caring for these children.
- On the morning of Day 2 of the inspection, there were 20 children present. All children were aged between 3 to 5 years. There were four staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the person in charge assisted with the administrative part of the inspection.
- (8)(a) The person in charge ensured that there were two staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*

(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) & (i)

Ten children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

The ten records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The ten children's records contained the following: -

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child received.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4) & (5) The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children's records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre school service having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Children had plenty of opportunities to move freely to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
 - being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining when invited to by children);
 - behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
 - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language;
 - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
 - using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning. Displayed on the walls were posters, visual aids, photographs, artwork, and themes including the children's art displays on spring and summer, our families, "who is here today?" transport, colours, emotions, happy birthday and "our dinosaurs" and "our superheroes."

- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- The staff and children sang action songs and nursery rhymes in circle time.
- The children were observed playing in the home areas with a selection of dolls and accessories, at the vanity unit with play accessories, at tabletop activities including jigsaws, puzzles, magnetic play, sorting shapes, playing with accessories in the doll's house. The children were observed at construction, singing, dancing, and playing with musical instruments.
- The children were observed at play in the outdoor area which was equipped with a varied selection of play materials to include a sheltered space with sand and water play, a walk mounted chalk board, balancing beams, a mud kitchen with play accessories, planting and digging opportunities, a large play boat, tyre play and a selection of bikes, trikes, and scooters.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. In each of the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive manner by the staff. It was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and positively by the staff.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.

- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'.
- Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

(b) The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner and the children sat at age-appropriate low-level chairs and tables at their snack times.

- The staff encouraged and supported the pre-school children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting.
- Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

Non-Compliance Information

The privacy and dignity of a child having their nappy changed could not be maintained. The location of the nappy mat was within the sanitary area off the preschool room, therefore when an older child was using the sanitary facilities (wash hand basin or toilet) a child having their nappy changed could be visibly viewed by other children and or a staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

On the 1st of July 2024, the business manager advised of the following;

Privacy screens have been ordered to ensure privacy and dignity if another child walks into the bathroom. and all staff will be trained in using the privacy screens. The Nappy Changing and Toileting policies have been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of the proof of purchase of the privacy screens and the updated nappy changing policy was submitted to the office of the early years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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.

General Safety:

- There was a buzzer access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The staff only areas, kitchen, staff sanitary area and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hygienic hand washing was available.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The person in charge clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the designated outdoor area to cause any risk of injury to the pre-school child.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.

- The playrooms and sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school rooms and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows and doors open throughout the inspection whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchenette for the storage of perishable foods.
- The person in charge had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Administration of Medication:

- Through discussion with the inspectors, the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the administration of medicines.
- There were no medications administered to the children on the days of the inspection.
- The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.
- All exit routes in the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had current training in first aid responder training
- (2)(a) The first aid box was appropriately stocked with items safely stored and easily accessible by the adults in a conspicuous position in a high press in the preschool room.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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.
- (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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 22nd of April 2024.
- (b) Records indicated that the last maintenance for the fire and smoke detection system was dated 9th of May 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the walls in the playrooms.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Records of the annual servicing by a competent person, of the firefighting equipment was not available The last documented record displayed was dated October 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

On the 1st of July 2024, the business manager advised of the following;

A new company have been contracted to update and supply all new fire safety equipment.

Works were carried out 11th June 2024. and we will ensure that the fire equipment company service the fire equipment on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of the service record of the firefighting equipment was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2025 covered 35 part time children and included the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,

outings undertaken as part of the service