

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN051
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Name of Service:	The Playhouse
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Address of Service:	7 The Wells, Cortober, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	N41 PH31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breda Durr
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	27/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	29
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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 full day care service is located on the outskirts of the town of Carrick on Shannon, A full day care service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs, and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care pre-school programmes are offered. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 48 pre-school children, at any one time. There are four playrooms namely the small toddler room 1, small toddler room 2, the big toddler room located on the ground floor and the pre-school room is located on the first floor. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a sleep room adjacent to the small toddler room 1 with five cots. Additionally, stackable beds and sleep mats are available for any older child requiring sleep provision. Quiet rest areas with child size seating are available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises for children's fresh air, exploration, and play.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily and is the designated person in charge. There is a named deputy person in charge. There are thirteen staff working directly with the children. The thirteen staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. Additionally, there is a designated chef/cleaner, who works in the service 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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*

(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 deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

Files for the thirteen staff and the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Twenty-eight of the twenty-eight written validated references, on file for the thirteen staff and the registered provider were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of the thirteen staff and the registered provider. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. and 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) Two of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age and had the required police vetting.

(4) Thirteen staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the thirteen staff.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(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).

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that the adult child ratios were adhered to.

(2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 35 pre-school children aged between 1 to 5 years.

- 14 children were aged 1 to 2 years 6 months,

- 8 children were aged 2 to 3 years.

- 13 children were aged 3 to 5 years.

There were eight staff directly caring for these children. The registered provider also assisted in the administration part of the inspection and provided relief to assist in the rooms as required for staff breaks.

In the afternoon, there were 29 pre-school children aged between 1 to 5 years.

- 11 children were aged 1 to 2 years, 6 months.

- 6 children were aged 2 to 3 years.

- 12 children were aged 3 to 5 years.

There were eight staff including the registered provider, caring for these children.

There was also a designated chef preparing, cooking meals and snacks and performing kitchen duties.

(4)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

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.

Compliance Information

- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible.
- The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The staff complied with the service's healthy eating policy.
- Nutritious meals and snacks were provided by the service and served at regular times and no more than 3 hours apart.
- Each child had enough time to eat and enjoy their meals and snacks without being rushed.
- The highchairs and the tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The staff encouraged children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training. On the day of inspection, twenty children in total from the small toddler room 1, small toddler room 2 and the big toddler room wore nappies and were changed on a regular basis.
- The privacy and dignity of a child having their nappy changed was maintained. The older children in the Pre-school room, had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff accompanied the child/children to the toilets and were available to assist if required.
- The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting / nappy changing. Staff responded to children's cues quickly.

- Picture and word reminders and instructions were displayed and used as aid memoirs.
- Staff provided for each child's comfort and need for rest, relaxation in each of the playrooms. The pre-school had safe and comfortable spaces for toddlers to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk and be protected from children who were more mobile.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. Children were aware of routines and daily transitions were seamless and made as comfortable as possible for example, getting ready for meals and sleep provision.
- The children were observed at free play, connecting, stacking, building, and linking. and doing puzzles and tabletop activities. The children played with transport vehicles on tracks. The children played house. The children enjoyed cutting, drawing, glueing, playing with play dough with rolling pins, cutters and shapes and playing with sand with jugs, sieves, and shovels.

The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as 'who is this?', 'how many are there?', and 'where is that?'. The children enjoyed action songs.

- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
 - having a key person system for each child,
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
 - 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,
 - using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
 - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
 - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
 - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.
- On speaking with the staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the preschool including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times, via text

messages, and by phone calls. The staff in the small toddler room 1 and 2 advised that a daily diary is maintained to communicate with the parents on the child's form, nappies, sleep and food provision.

- The staff collated individual profile scrapbooks showing the experiences that the children engaged in. The themes to date included 'my first day at preschool', 'my birthday bun' seasonal clothing Halloween, 'hibernation', 'Santas Post box', 'My snow globe', 'My footprints', Easter and 'My shamrock' and pre-writing, painting, and colouring skills.
- 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. The inspectors noted the staff acknowledged a child's achievements '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 ensured that the children had ongoing opportunities to interact informally with one another for example at free play, parallel play, and eating together.
- The staff provided opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.
- 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.

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 was secure to prevent unauthorised entry.
- The external play area to the rear and side of the premises were 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.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Blind cords were securely fastened thereby preventing any potential risk. Windows had restrictive access devices as a safety precaution.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the service.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting / nappy changing, outdoor play, messy play and after blowing their noses. The children washed their hands under supervision prior to their snacks and mealtimes.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage containers.
- The children's barrier creams were clearly individually labelled and stored within the nappy changing area.
- The nappy changing area had a leak-proof, sealable airtight container for the disposal of nappies.
- The nappy changing policy was displayed on the wall of the nappy changing area and staff completed nappy changing sheet records for each child requiring nappy change, with a section for staff comment / remedial action taken.

- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was presented and available for inspection. There were cleaning schedules and records for the playrooms, sanitary areas, and outdoor areas and on the cleaning and disinfection procedure undertaken in the service.
- The records reviewed showed that high contact areas were cleaned regularly during the day and the service was thoroughly cleaned each evening after it had closed.
- The outdoor play equipment was cleaned after each child's use, and prior to each child's use with documented records maintained.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray, the inspector observed this practice on the day of inspection.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- Medicines examined were within date.
- Staff advised that the suncreams supplied by parents and guardians, and stored in the service, with dates of expiry checked on an annual basis.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room with five cots for younger children's sleep provision. One child from the small toddler room 1 was observed sleeping at 11:20hrs. Stackable beds and sleep mats were available for older children requiring sleep if required. On the day of inspection, children were observed sleeping on demand.
- The sleep policy detailed the correct temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements.
- The inspector observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes. The service kept documented sleep records. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child (as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy) and the signature of the staff member who checks the sleeping child.

- A digital probe thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child.
- Age /tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets, that allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 2 years of age.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The press locks were broken under the sinks in the small toddler room 2 and the big toddler which could pose a potential access/safety risk as there were cleaning products stored in these presses.
2. Two of the radiator covers in the preschool room were in poor condition and damaged with the potential risk of injury to a child.
3. The linoleum floor covering in the hallway on the ground floor had evidence was splitting in two sections and a section of the linoleum floor covering in the preschool room was ripped and could pose a potential tripping hazard.
4. An exposed screw was observed on a section of the wall adjacent to the handwashing sink in the preschool room which could pose risk of injury to a child.
5. A section of the flooring was incomplete at the fire exit door in the preschool room which could pose a tripping hazard.

Infection Control:

6. In the small toddler room 2 there was an adult chair with evidence of being frayed and torn, thereby preventing effective cleaning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise

General Safety:

1. New locks have been fitted on the presses under the sink in the small toddler room 2 and the big toddler room and a risk assessment will be carried out regularly to ensure there are in proper working order.
2. The two radiator covers have been replaced and these have been included on the risk assessment checklist.

3. The linoleum floor covering in the hallway on the ground floor has been secured and the section of the linoleum floor covering in the preschool room has been repaired and included on the risk assessment checklist.
4. The exposed screw was removed on a section of the wall adjacent to the handwashing sink in the preschool room and included on the risk assessment checklist.
5. The section of the flooring was repaired complete at the fire exit door in the preschool room

Infection Control:

6. The adult chair has been removed from the small toddler room 2 and replaced with another chair for adult use.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise of

1. The new locks fitted on the press doors under the sinks in the small toddler room 2 and the big toddler room.
2. The replaced radiator covers in the preschool room.
3. The repaired and secured linoleum floor covering on the ground floor and the repaired section of flooring in the preschool room.
4. The removed screw from a section of the wall adjacent to the handwashing sink in the preschool room.
5. The complete section of flooring at the fire exit door in the preschool room.

Infection Control:

6. The new adult chair in the small toddler room 2.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately 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

- (1) Eleven staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of first aid training for children and were immediately available to the children.
- (2)(a) The first aid boxes were safely secured in an easily accessible position on a high shelf in the preschool rooms.
- (b) The first aid boxes were readily accessible to the adults in the event that a child required treatment and in a conspicuous position with content items within date.

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.*
- (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 6th of March 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 01/08/2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in each playroom and on the notice board in the hallway.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Records of the annual servicing by a competent person, of the premises smoke and fire detection system were not available. The last documented record presented was dated 15/03/2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the smoke and fire detection was serviced on 14/04/2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise of the service record of the smoke and fire detection service.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action 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 had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2025, which was for a full day care service for 48 children and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.