

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015SO011

Name of Service: Dreamchasers Childcare Services

Address of Service: Merville Community Centre, Maugheraboy, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F91 X2WF

Name of Registered Provider: Anne Fox

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 04/06/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello
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

Description of service

Dreamchasers Childcare Services is a community run sessional early years service. The service caters for children aged 2 years 6 months to 6 years, operating from 9:15am to 12:45pm five days per week, 44 weeks per year. The service is located in the Merville Community Centre building on the outskirts of Sligo town. The service operates from two designated care rooms within the community centre, namely preschool 1 and preschool 2. There is a large indoor hall available for physical play opportunities in inclement weather conditions. A managers office, a kitchen and adult and child sanitary accommodation are also available for the preschool services use. Outdoor play areas are available to the rear and side of the community centre. School age childcare is also provided.

Staffing

There are seven adults employed in the service to work directly with the children. One additional adult is employed on a work training programme. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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/ premises and facilities. 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, 26, 28 and 32. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

1) (a) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of all seven adults in the service were reviewed.

Two written and verified past employer references or references from an other source were available in respect of all seven adults employed in the service.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for all seven adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as none of the adults employed in the service had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Seven adults had attained a major award in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement

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)

There were five adults working directly with 18 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(3)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Pre-school 1: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.

Preschool 1: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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)

The service operates out of two large care rooms in a community centre. Preschool One is a large open plan room with the children's artwork decorating the walls. Open shelving equipped with various resources that are age and stage appropriate to the children, facilitate choice for the preschool children ensuring that play is child led.

Resources include arts and crafts to stimulate creativity, jig saws and puzzles to develop fine motor skills.

Construction areas with building blocks, cars and trucks allow for imaginative play. A home corner equipped with a kitchen, dolls and dress up allow for role play. Similarly preschool two is laid out in various interest areas that allow for creativity and imaginative play.

The curriculum is clearly evidenced by the artwork displayed on the wall. A monthly poster in picture format evidence the planned curriculum throughout the year to document the learning of the children. The children learned about nature and autumn, dental health and earth day and animals. Evidence of community engagement with pictures of the community gardai visit in November was also on display. Each child had their own individual

journal which logged their journey through the preschool, to include observations made by the staff and goals set to achieve before transitioning to national school.

(1) (b)

The adults working in the service were observed to interact with the children in a positive manner. Independence was promoted in all tasks, as the adults supervised and prompted if required, for example as children prepared to go outside, children were prompted to put on coats and use zips, where children had difficulty, the adults prompted in a kind gentle manner and gave praise when task was completed. Similarly, independence was promoted in toileting and children were supervised from a distance while maintaining dignity.

Children brought their lunches in from home, and these consisted of a variety of fruit, sandwiches cheese and crackers. Drinks of water were provided throughout the session. Lunch times was observed to be a relaxed experience where children and adults sat together conversing about activities they had undertaken in the preschool and plans for graduation.

Staff members were observed to ensure all children were included in discussions int the preschool. At circle time a discussion about animals in the zoo took place. The adults encouraged turn taking and respect for listening to each other, this ensured that all children had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. A diversity poster demonstrating various people in the community reflect the diverse backgrounds of the community in a positive way. This helps the children to learn, become aware of and be respectful of differences.

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:

- On the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, doors remained secured, and entry was facilitated by a bell entry system.
- The outdoor area consisted of high-level green metal fencing with a locked gate to ensure no unauthorised access to the outdoor play area.
- Risk assessments were in place for the safe transition from the care rooms to the outdoor area as the outdoor play area was not directly accessible from the care room.

- Blind cords were secure to the wall and all flexes were inaccessible to the preschool child.
- All waste bins were secure to the rear of the building that was inaccessible to the preschool child.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for safe hand hygiene practices.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned after messy play and prior to snack times.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and up to date.
- The service was visibly clean with materials and resources visibly clean.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered on the day, however on interview staff were aware of the safe practices of medication administration in line with the service policy.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were free from obstruction throughout the service.
- Evacuation plans were clearly displayed in all care rooms.

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) On the day of inspection there were four staff members on duty with first aid responder training that were available to the preschool children at all times.

(2) (a) (b)

A first aid box was readily available in preschool 2 which was fully stocked and available to all children attending the preschool 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 fire fighting 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)

The registered provider has ensured that regular monthly fire drills take place within the preschool service. The most recent fire evacuation drill was on the 14th of May 2024.

(b)

A log of all firefighting equipment was available with an annual maintenance date of the 24th of October 2023.

(2) (c)

These records were made available to the authorised person on the day.

(3)

The person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider was aware of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for a period of 5 years.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed throughout the preschool service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider showed evidence of suitable and adequate insurance cover for 42 children in a sessional service up until the 27th of March 2025.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (4) *A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.*
- (5) *The requirement in paragraph (4) is without prejudice to any requirement to retain the record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) under any other enactment or rule of law.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- On review of the service complaints policy the required necessary details of the procedures to be followed when making a complaint, how it is dealt with and how the complaint is kept informed is clearly outlined.

(2) (a) (b).

The person in charge informed the authorised person that no complaint had been received in the previous two years. On interview the person in charge was knowledgeable about the process to follow when dealing with a complaint.

(4)

The person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider was aware of the requirement set out in regulation of the retention time for files relating to complaints of the preschool service.