

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO019		
Name of Service:	Hopes & Dreams		
Address of Service:	29 Cartron Heights, Sligo, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 AV24		
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Casey		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	23/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM 18
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
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Description of service

Hopes and Dreams is a privately run full day care services established in 1999. The service is situated in a housing estate in Sligo town. The service caters for a maximum of 50 children ranging in age from 1-6 years. On the day of inspection, the children being supported were aged 2 and older.

The service operates from an adapted two story dwelling house. The ground floor operates two care rooms, one large room for pre-school children and a second care room for children aged 2-3 years. The first floor of the building provides office space, kitchen, and staff area.

Outdoor areas are provided both to the front and rear of premises, offering an enclosed area, secured by fencing and gates.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection four staff members were providing care and support to 18 children. The Person in charge also worked directly with the children in a supernumerary capacity. Breaks were covered by an additional staff member.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 registered provider, 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*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

1. (a) (b), (c).
There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. All staff are aware of the management structure and their roles and responsibilities.
2. (a) (b). The records of nine staff employed in the service were reviewed. Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer were available in respect of all nine staff employed in the service.
(c) A garda vetting disclosure was available for the nine staff members employed in the service.
(d) International police vetting was available for the two staff members that had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
3. The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to any person being appointed or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
4. All staff working directly with children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 18 children attending the service being supervised directly by 4 adults.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of part 1 of schedule 6.

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)(b)

The service provides a warm friendly environment for the children to learn, explore and develop. The pre-school room is decorated with artwork the children have completed throughout the year. One wall is decorated with the flags of the world and a diversity corner, recognising the different cultures and values of the variety of nationalities of children attending the service. Individual learning journals evidence the journey of learning for the children attending the service. On review of these journals, observations recorded were individual to each child. Learning goals were set, observed, and reviewed in line with the Aistear curriculum.

Observations were individual to each child, including tasks such as cutting, threading, counting, pencil writing, scissor use, individual and group play.

The two playrooms in operation had a variety of resources available to the children that were appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. All materials were stored in open shelving, encouraging a child led approach to play. In the preschool room there were clearly defined areas of interest including construction area, home area, arts and crafts, puzzles and puppets.

The toddler room also had materials and resources suitable to the age and stage of the development of the child. Interest areas included sensory area, soft toys, home corner, building blocks and puzzles. Outdoor areas were situated to both the front and back of the building.

The outdoor area at the front of the service was used by the toddler room as direct access from the room was available. This area was equipped with a variety of trikes, slides, playhouse suitable to the children in the toddler room. The outdoor area at the back of the service provided opportunities for play for the preschool children. This area was equipped with bikes, scooters, playhouses suitable to the age and stage of development of the preschool children. This outdoor area also had an area for growing plants, where the children learned how to plant seeds, water and feed plants and watch them grow.

The service took measures to support the children's relationship and maintain links from home. In both rooms, family trees were displayed with pictures of the children's families. A notice board beside the entrance to the service displayed various information for the families including meal plans and learning plans for the month ahead.

The inspector observed positive interactions between the staff members and children on the day of inspection. Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle and kind towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to in a respectful manner, first names were used, staff members got down to the child's eye level to explain things, gentle voice tones were used in all interactions. Children appeared happy in the service, laughing and joking with their peers and staff.

The service operated a healthy eating policy which is informed to parents on enrolment. Snacks are provided from home and perishable items are stored in the fridge until use. Dinners are provided from a catering company that deliver directly to the service. On the day of inspection dinner provided was a pasta bake with vegetables. Children were observed getting ready for mealtimes by hand washing and setting tables. Drinking water is freely available throughout the day in the service.

Rest areas are provided in the playrooms with soft cushions and floor mats. In the toddler room low level stackable beds are available for children requiring sleep.

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 to the service was found to be secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented unauthorised persons entering the service and children leaving the service unsupervised.
- All toys and play equipment were safe and in a good condition in each of the playrooms.
- The outdoor areas were fenced and secure, allowing only authorised access.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed and suitable for a means of escape if required.
- Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of preschool children.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were provided within the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to be completing hand hygiene before mealtimes, after outdoor and messy play and after using the bathroom.
- Staff were observed to be completing hand hygiene before and after nappy changes, before and after serving food and before and after outdoor play.
- Nappy changes were completed as per schedule and as required. Staff were observed to follow the nappy changing policy in place in the service.
- The materials and resources of the playrooms were visibly clean. Cleaning schedules were in place and signed of once complete.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in operation throughout the service.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection.
- On review of administration records, administration is signed by two staff members prior to administration and parents are informed of same.

Safe Sleep:

- Low level stackable beds were available for children over two that required sleep.

Fire Safety:

- All fire doors were free from obstruction to ensure safe exit from service in an emergency.
- There was documented evidence of regular fire drills in the service.
- Fire evacuation notices were displayed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The blinds in use in the service had blind cords in the middle of the blind. While this posed no immediate risk, if the blind was closed the cord was accessible to children posing a safety risk.

It is acknowledged that once brought to the attention of the Registered provider, these cords were removed immediately.

Infection Control:

2. The wooden casing in the sanitary area was decayed and damaged by water and posed an infection control risk.

It is acknowledged that when the inspector informed the registered provider, this had been identified by the RP and had been scheduled for repair.

3. One foot operated bin was broken and required replacing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection once brought to the attention of the registered provider, the cords were removed immediately. The registered provider has made assurances that any future blinds purchased will have cords secured.

Infection Control:

2. After the inspection the registered provider replaced the damaged casing and installed a new wooden casing. In order to prevent this decay occurring again the registered provider has assured regular checks for any damage will be carried out.

3. A foot operated pedal bin has been ordered. The registered provider has given assurances that waste bins going forward will be foot operated.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Immediate action carried out on the day of inspection was witnessed by the inspector.

Infection Control:

Photographs submitted.

Summary Comment

The evidence and the corrective and preventative actions submitted for the non-compliances found on inspection have been reviewed by the inspector and regulatory compliance has been achieved.

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) Four members of staff are trained in First aid Responder. On review of the roster, the registered provider has ensured that there is a person always trained in first aid available to children while the service is in operation.

(2) (a) (b). A fully stocked first aid box is provided in both care rooms of the service located in a conspicuous position. The first aid supplies are available to children at all times.

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) There is a record of all fire evacuation drills in the service, the most recent drill on the 22.06.23.
(b) There is a record of the number and type of fire equipment and alarms, including the most recent service of this equipment on the 17.01.23.
- (2) (c) The record referred to in paragraph (1) is open to be inspected by an authorised person.
- (3) The Registered provider has retained records for a period of five years.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service is adequately insured for the period 28.03.2022 to 27.03.2024 to provide a full day care service to 30 children.