

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO051
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sandcastles Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Enniscrone, Co. Sligo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F26 KC81
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Justina Reape
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/09/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	74	PM	50
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello, M Farrell, N McEndoo
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

This service is a community based, purpose built childcare facility which has been in operation since 2007. It is located on the edge of the seaside town of Enniscrone in Co. Sligo. Full day, part time and sessional care for children from six months to six years of age is offered. The service is also registered for school age children. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:30 hours.

## Staffing

There were twenty one adults present on the day of inspection and of these, seventeen were working directly with the children. The manager did not work in the playrooms on the day. Two designated adults worked in the kitchen while one designated adult completed administration tasks.

## 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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 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 inspectors wish 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premise throughout the period of inspection.  
Samples of attendance records available for inspection showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy were present in the service whenever the service was in operation.
- (2) It was confirmed with the designated person in charge that the vetting files for nine staff members had not been previously reviewed.
- The following vetting information was available for these nine staff members:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular their most recent employer for four staff members. One written validated reference from the staff member's most recent employer for four staff.
  - (b) A written validated reference from a source other than a past employer for four staff members.
  - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for nine staff.
  - (d) The required international police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) Certification of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or above was available for the nine staff members whose vetting documentation was reviewed.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer was on file for one staff who had previous employments that a reference was required to be sourced from.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2) (a) On file was a reference from staffs most recent employer, one from the college tutor and one from the landlord. We have obtained a reference from the two weeks work placement in the school as outlined on staff members CV. Management will ensure staff have obtained references from their work placements prior to recruiting.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentary evidence submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 9 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

## **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)  
The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times. On the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service there were 15 staff providing direct care to 74 children. An additional adult was providing relief cover for staff breaks.  
A sample review of attendance records showed that adequate numbers of adults were provided to work with children whenever the service was in operation.

- (2)
- 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:
- Tiny Tots playroom: 2 adults cared for 5 children aged between six months and one year.
- Mini Minor playroom: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged one and two years of age.
- Little Smarties playroom: 2 adults cared for 11 children aged between two and three years.
- Bright Stars playroom: 3 adults cared for 11 children aged three and four years of age. This playroom catered for a sessional service only.
- Shooting Stars: 3 adults cared for 19 children including 8 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age and 11 children aged over 3 years of age. Sessional services were in progress in the playroom on the morning of inspection.
- Little Stars: 3 adults cared for 18 children aged four and five years of age.
- (8)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times when children were present in the service as evidence in sample attendance records reviewed.

### 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

The children availing of full day care services were provided with regular meals and snacks that were freshly prepared by the cook in the service. On the day of inspection, the main meal provided in the service consisted of fish fingers, potato, carrot and turnip and gravy. This meal was modified as necessary for the babies in the 'Tiny Tots' room. Bibs were used to protect the clothes of younger children and highchairs were used in the 'Tiny Tots' for the comfort and safety of the babies during mealtimes. Independence was promoted in the baby room and age-appropriate utensils were provided to assist the children at mealtimes. In the sessional service the children

brought in their lunch from home which consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts in line with the service healthy eating policy. Children sat together in groups at tables at mealtimes supervised by staff who chatted with the children encouraging socialisation.

Childrens individual sleep needs were met with standard cots available for children less than two years of age and low-level sleep beds were in place for the sleep needs of the older children. Staff members were observed to be responsive to the needs of the child, observing sleep cues and supporting babies to sleep as required and outside dedicated sleep times if needed. There was suitable space for children to rest during the day within the care rooms. On the day of inspection, it was observed that whilst outside some children from the ‘Little Stars room’ requested a rest, a tepee was brought out and a soft mat was also put down for children to lay on.

Children who were toilet trained were encouraged and supported by the staff to the toilet as needed. Nappy changing was observed to be undertaken at regular intervals and more frequently if required.

The service was large and spacious with six care rooms in operation on the day of the inspection. The care rooms were well decorated with colourful posters and children’s individual artwork. All care rooms were adequately resourced with a wide variety of toys and equipment suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. Interest areas included home corners, construction areas, arts and crafts, dress up, puzzles, sensory toys. Each care room had direct access to the outdoor area. There were four outdoor spaces available to the children in the service . These spaces including two enclosed areas, one to the front and one to the rear of the building that had canopies which provided shelter in all weathers so access to the outdoors can be facilitated daily. Two of the spaces had large areas of grass ground cover for children to run and play in. Resources in the outdoor areas were varied to support the development of the age and stage of the children using the area. These resources included bikes, trikes, tractors, sand and water tables, playhouses, wooden maze, swings and slides.

The service took measures to support children’s relationships and maintain positive relationships with the family. The service uses an electronic application to communicate with parents. This application provides real time information of food intake, nappy changes, and sleep time and is also used to send photographs of activities completed in the service. On the day of inspection, the application was used as a communication method to reassure a parent that their child had settled into the care room as earlier in the morning the child had difficulty transitioning. Staff members were observed to being respectful, gentle, and kind towards the children in their care. Babies were observed being held and cuddled and the staff caring for them interacted in a playful gentle manner. Older children were observed to be given time to chat to the adults caring for them and adults listened, praised and encouraged children.

## 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 arrival to the service, the front entrance door was secured, access to the building was through a buzzer system which was operated by staff. This prevented children from exiting the building unsupervised, and unauthorised persons from entering. Further security was in place with key coded internal doors. The gates of the outdoor play areas were also found to be secured.
- Finger guards to prevent pinching or injury to child fingers were found on all internal doors within the premises.
- Cleaning products were stored up high in cupboards out of reach of children. Lower cupboards were secured with safety latches.
- Equipment, materials, and toys were in good order throughout the service and developmentally appropriate to the children using them.
- Where roller blinds were in use, blind cords were appropriately secured with restrictors.
- Low level windows were painted to ensure visibility for the children to prevent injury.
- The lobby area leading to the kitchen was inaccessible to children by way of a retractable partition secured to the walls.
- The weather on the day was very warm and sunny and the children from the Mini Minor playroom played outdoors under a canopy wearing hats with a drinks station set up outside. The staff were observed to apply sunscreen at regular intervals that they said had been provided from home for each child.

##### Infection Control:

- Within the classrooms general waste bins were lidded and operated by foot pedal. Children were encouraged to rinse any food recyclable material and place in a separate bin.
- Children were encouraged to wash their hands prior to rolling snack and also when coming in from outdoor play and after using the toilet.
- Nappy changing facilities were provided in the service. Each area was provided with foot pedal operated bin for the disposal of nappies, a wash hand basin and liquid soap. The staff were observed to wear

aprons and gloves during nappy changing procedures and wash their and the children's hands after changing nappies.

- Individual bed/cot linen was provided for the children and laundered regularly by the service.
- Separate storage was provided for the children's personal belongings.

### Administration of Medication:

- An Individual Care plan was in place was for one child who may require medication during the day. Staff were aware of signs and symptoms in relation to the child's illness and kept a record of their observations throughout the day. Staff were aware of procedures to follow should intervention be required.
- Staff were aware of procedures to follow in the event of administering medication to children. Records containing the child's name, dosage, time, staff who administered the dose and a second staff member who observed the dosage were available for viewing by the inspector.

### Safe Sleep:

- There were two sleep areas in the service with standard cots available to facilitate the sleep needs of younger children. Children were observed to sleep during the inspection with the staff observing and recording their colour, position and breathing at 10-minute intervals.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were clearly marked and unobstructed.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. Room air temperatures were recorded between 23.6°C and 25.8°C in the Mini Minor, Bright Stars, Shooting Stars and Little Stars rooms and Little Smarties, which is at variance to the recommended 18°C-22°C for care rooms. It is acknowledged that on the day of inspection temperatures were high nationally and that efforts were made by the person in charge and staff on the day to try and reduce temperatures across the service.

### Infection Control:

2. The kitchen door was found to be wedged open at 11.10am. This door leads to a non-ventilated area where the toilets are situated for the Bright Stars children. The toilet doors were also open. This could lead to infection control issues. It is acknowledged that the kitchen door was closed on request.
3. The cloakroom door in the Little Stars care room was held open by a latch, with two toilet doors opening onto the cloakroom. This could lead to infection control issues. It is acknowledged the door was closed when requested by the inspector.
4. The service had a rolling towel dispenser for drying hands in some sanitary areas. While it is acknowledged that these towel dispensers are replaced weekly by the contractor, disposable paper towels should be in place to prevent cross infection.

### Safe Sleep:

5. The air temperature in the sleep room off the Mini Minor playroom was recorded between 21.9 and 23.1°C during the day when children were sleeping in the room. This was outside the required range of 16-20°C for a sleep room. It is acknowledged that on the day of inspection, temperatures were high nationally and that efforts were made by the person in charge and staff on the day to try and reduce temperatures across the service. The staff removed outer clothing from the children when placing them down to rest and also opened doors to try to reduce the air temperature of the sleep room.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. Every effort is made to control temperatures. This includes opening all windows, using the air purifiers, giving the children additional water and removing layers of clothing as necessary in the short term.  
On the day of the inspection temperatures were high nationally i.e. 28 degrees. The manager has brought the issue of controlling temperatures to the attention of the CCC prior to the inspection and he CCC has escalated the issue to DECDIY for consideration for capital funding.  
Staff and management will continue to monitor temperatures daily.

##### Infection Control:

2. Kitchen door was closed when asked and the Cook will ensure kitchen door is closed at all times
3. Cloakroom door was closed when informed by the inspector. Staff in the care room will ensure door to cloakroom is closed when not in use by children.

4. Roller towel company was contacted to take down the roller towels and replace with disposable hand towel dispensers. Pedal bins were ordered.

**Safe Sleep:**

5. Staff and management will continue to monitor temperatures daily. Every effort will be made to control temperatures. This includes opening all windows, using the air purifiers, giving the children additional water and removing layers of clothing as necessary

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

Documentary evidence submitted

**Infection Control:**

Documentary evidence submitted.

**Safe Sleep:**

Documentary evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The response submitted by the registered provider in the corrective and preventive actions have been reviewed and accepted by the early years inspectorate. The non compliances found on inspection have now been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

**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) persons were trained in first aid for children including first aid responder (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2). (a)(b).

The first aid equipment was readily available and safely stored in a conspicuous location in the 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.
- (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 designated person in charge provided evidence of monthly fire drills taking place in the service the most recent being the 18.08.2023.
- (b) The service maintained an inventory of all fire equipment and smoke detection systems in the facility with the most recent service date of 04.08.2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed in conspicuous position in the care rooms and the assembly point was noted in the car park.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had on display a certificate of insurance valid until the 27 March 2024 showing that adequate full day care service insurance cover was in place for the service's maximum number of children.