

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO054
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Skreen/Dromard Comm Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carnaboll, Dromard, Co. Sligo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F91 EY01
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hazel Finnerty
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	N/a
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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
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

The service is a community based sessional service is located in a rural setting in west Co. Sligo. The service is registered to provide services for children aged between three and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday and provides a morning session between 09:30 and 12:30 hours. The premises is located on the first floor of a community centre and there is one large playroom and sanitary accommodation. The service has access to an outdoor space off the premises on a daily basis. This outdoor area is a community sports facility and the service use a designated area of a running track.

### Staffing

There are four adults employed in the service at present. The registered provider is not involved in the day to day running of 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, 16 (k), 17, 19, 23, 25 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 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.*

*(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).

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

(2) (a) (b).

The records of all four adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Eight 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 four adults employed in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the four adults. 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 available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months.

(3)

The registered provider had ensured that all vetting procedures were carried out prior to an adult working directly with a preschool child.

(4)

The four adults had attained major awards 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 an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were two adults working directly with 15 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (k)

Six records of accidents and incidents from 2024 were reviewed, the person in charge had ensured that risk assessments were completed as necessary after each incident and that the parent or guardian were informed if their child had been involved in any accident or incident while in the preschool service.

(3)

These records were made available and open for inspection on the day by the authorised person.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensures that prior to enrolment the parent of a child proposing to attend the service receives the necessary information outlined in regulation 16 (a) to (g) this includes the name and qualifications of staff, details of adult child ratios, the facilities available and the policies and procedures of the service. This information is communicated electronically through email. When a child is enrolled in the service communication with parents continue through a messaging service and a notice board at the entrance to the preschool.

### 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 children's artwork decorates the walls of the preschool service evidencing pieces of work completed throughout the preschool year. The children's bespoke alphabet is in one area and in another the height chart of the children demonstrating the growth of the child over the time spent in the preschool service. Throughout the preschool the materials and resources available for the children allow for a variety of learning. A sensory table with trays of sand, rice, seeds, leaves, and water facilitate learning through touch, introducing textures while also teaching the basics of mathematics while filling containers of water and sand. An arts and crafts area with an easel gives the children an opportunity to be creative and self-expressive. A home corner equipped with playhouses, kitchen, play food and dolls allow for role play and imaginative play. Building blocks, puzzles and tabletop activities stimulate the mind while also developing fine motor skills. On the day the children were engaged in song practice preparing for their upcoming graduation from preschool. The staff members had spent time adapting a popular song with dance moves to make it applicable to the children graduating. The children took great pride in practicing this routine in preparation for the graduation.

All of the children had individual learning journals which gave a holistic picture of the learning journey of the preschool child. The staff members had documented observations throughout the previous two years and had identified individual learning objectives which the children worked towards. These journals gave an insight into the accomplishments of the preschool child on their journey in preparation for national school.

The outdoor area of the preschool is a shared community athletic track and playground. Each morning the staff members on duty complete a review of the area ensuring there are no hazards or risks for the preschool children.

Once the area is deemed safe for use, the resources located in a storage container beside the athletic track are brought out. Resources include balance bikes, trikes, and ride on toys. Footballs and goal posts, outdoor building blocks and athletic training materials including cones and hula hoops. These resources allow for development of gross motor skills as well as developing coordination agility and balance. The service ensures that access to the outdoors is available throughout the year by ensuring children have the appropriate waterproof clothing.

(1) (b)

On the day interactions between the adults and children were observed to be kind and respectful. The children appeared comfortable and content in the presence of their peers and staff. Minor disagreements between children were resolved quickly by the intervention of staff using distraction techniques. Children were encouraged to take turns and share toys. Staff members used praise and encouragement throughout puzzles and tasks which gave the children a sense of accomplishment once task was achieved.

Independence was promoted as demonstrated by staff guiding and prompting on the changing of clothes to get ready to go outside and using the toileting independently. Children were given responsibility with various tasks including tidying up after playing and preparing for snack time by organising lunch boxes and giving out drinks. Children were identified as leaders in transitions from inside to the outdoor area, this leader assisted the staff member for making sure all children stayed in a line going from one area to another and that all children were accounted for.

Snacks were provided from home in line with the healthy eating guidelines from the service. On the day the lunches consisted of fruit, yoghurts, sandwiches with fillings of cheese, ham and salad. All lunch boxes were stored in the fridge on arrival ensuring perishable items were stored correctly. Snack times were an inclusive experience where staff members sat with the children and conversed over plans for the evening.

## 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 preschool was found to be secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service. A bell entry system monitored by CCTV ensured no unauthorised person was granted access to the preschool service.
- The preschool room is located on the first floor of a building. Suitable handrails at both adult and child level had been provided. The stair well floor cover is well maintained and consists of non-slip covering in good condition.
- All windows have been risk assessed and window restrictors are in place as required.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for safe hand hygiene.
- Children were observed to wash hands prior to snack time and after messy play or using the toilet.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned after messy play and prior to snack times.
- Toys and resources were observed to be cleaned after the preschool session

##### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day. On interview staff were knowledgeable about the medication policy and requirements for administration.

##### Safe Sleep:

- A rest area was provided if children wished to take a break or opt out of an activity. On the day children were observed to sit and relax with a book at various times throughout the session.

##### Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire doors are unobstructed.
- Evidence of monthly fire evacuation drills were available.

##### Outing:

- Risk assessments were completed prior to all outings.

## 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 two adults trained in first aid responder (FAR) were available to the preschool at all times.

(2) (a) (b)

A fully stocked first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location in the care room. A second first aid box was available for outdoor activities.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The registered provider supplied evidence of adequate insurance for 22 preschool children in a sessional service up until the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.