

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD099
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Name of Service:	Williamstown Community Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Farronshoneen, Williamstown, Co Waterford
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Eircode:	X91W659
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Doherty
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford.
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Inspection undertaken by:	M.Ryan.
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Title:	Early Years Inspector.
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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

Williamstown Community Childcare Centre opened in April 2007 and is located on the outskirts of Waterford city. The service is managed by a board of management. The service presently offers full day care and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme and the Community Childcare Subvention Schemes. The premises is a two-story building purpose built as a community childcare facility. The building has four childcare rooms, one sleep room, a catering kitchen, adult and children's toilet facilities, laundry/cleaning storage rooms and a nappy changing room, office space, staff room and a meeting room. The outdoor play area is safely secured at the rear of the building adjacent to the downstairs childcare rooms. Williamstown Community Childcare operates from 08:00hrs to 17:30hrs Monday to Friday for children from 18 months to 5 years of age. A school age childcare programme is offered in the afternoons.

Staffing

The service employs a manager, an assistant manager and 17 part-time childcare staff. It has a further one staff member on a Community Employment Scheme. The service also employs one part-time cleaner and two administrators

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 and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play.

Regulation 22 – Food and drink.

Regulation 25 - First aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

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
- (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.

(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) The manager was the designated person in charge. The service also had an assistant manager who was able to deputise as required.
 - (b) At all times during the inspection the manager was on the premises.
 - (c) The service was governed by a voluntary management committee solely for the purpose of running Williamstown Community Childcare Service. There were clear details available indicating the arrangements for the roles, responsibilities of the committee and the staff working in the service.

(2)
All staff files were reviewed and since the last inspection on the 28 July 2021 there were five new staff members employed to work with the children.

The following was observed on the new staff members files:

- (a) There were ten written validated references from past employers.
- (b) Not applicable as all written references were from past employers.
- (c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána on file for all new staff working directly with the children in the service.
- (d) One new staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months, police vetting had been completed from the necessary jurisdiction.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5, 6 or 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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)

On the day of inspection, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection the staff: child ratios were maintained as follows:

In the Toddler room there were 14 children aged 18 months to 2.5 years of age being cared for by 4 staff on a full day basis.

In Pre-school 1 room there were 20 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff on a full daycare basis.

In Pre-school 2 room there were 10 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff on a sessional basis.

In Pre-school 3 room there were 10 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff on a part time basis.

On the afternoon of the inspection the staff: child ratios were maintained as follows:

In the Toddler room there were 15 children aged 18 months to 2.5 years of age being cared for by 4 staff on a full day basis.

In Pre-school 1 room there were 15 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff on a full daycare basis.

In Pre-school 3 room there were 4 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years of age being cared for by 2 staff on a part time basis.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

1(a)

On the day of the inspection, there were four rooms in use for the care of preschool children. The ground floor has two childcare rooms, the toddler room and pre-school room 3 while the first floor accommodates two pre-school rooms, pre-school room 1 and preschool room 2.

The toddler room was a large rectangular shaped room organised to ensure that there was ample space conducive to children learning to walk and move around with comfort. The children had access to activity sets, multicultural dolls, a floor play area, kitchen corner and a built-in stainless-steel trough for water/messy play and hand washing, all these opportunities were laid out and accessible at a low level around the room.

The furniture was age-appropriate including toddler chairs and chairs for staff. There was a soft area with soft matting, pillows and a long, large bean bag that could seat three to four children. Some of the children were observed sitting with the staff on the soft matting with baskets of play items and small toys. The tables were arranged in the center of the room and staff sat encouraging children's engagement by chatting and conversing about their chosen play item.

Preschool rooms had low level tables and chairs suitable to the age and stage of development of the children using them, these were arranged in the rooms so as to allow for well-defined areas of interest divided by child accessible shelving. The room layout supported the children to find and independently access the toys and materials they wanted. Each room had good quality timber play furniture for the provision of well stocked large home corner areas to facilitate imaginative and pretend play. All three rooms were well stocked with open ended play materials such as blocks, plastic pipes, magnetic squares, moon sand, and freshly made playdough supporting children's imaginative and sensorial play opportunities.

Children’s creativity and interest in nature was encouraged in each room as observed on the day. One of the crafts completed on the day were bird feeders made with breakfast cereals and pipe cleaners and could be hung with the addition of an attached string. Another room was celebrating bug week and larvae and beetles in a glass tank. The children were observed to be excited when getting the opportunity to supply the tank with food. During story time in this room the theme of bugs and insects was continued with the “hungry caterpillar” story. There was a further food tasting session whereby the children were introduced to fruit and vegetables that a caterpillar would eat.

(1)(b)

The sleep room was adjacent to the toddler room. This room had one standard cot a supply of stackable beds and storage cupboard space for children’s personalised sheets and blankets.

(3)(a)

Outdoor area

There was a designated outdoor play space that was safe and securely fenced off from the surrounding houses and green park area by high concrete walls. The ground floor rooms had double doors that opened into the outdoor area. The surface of the main play area was surfaced with sponge matting, there was an additional sub divided garden with low concrete walls that was grassed with raised beds. The main large outdoor play area had a large activity frame with slides and a climbing wall. Large tractor tyres facilitated obstacle challenges. There were supplies of trikes, scooters, bicycles, and children were observed enjoying using these. There were child-size garden picnic tables with seating.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Preschool rooms 1, 2 and 3 did not have adequate cosy areas with furniture or equipment conducive to rest.

As children in pre-school room 1 and 3 can be in these rooms for more than 5 hours it is essential that a designated area be provided that is conducive to relaxation so as to offer children down time from other activities. Therefore, it is a requirement that each of these three rooms develops a designated defined area set up to create the opportunity and atmosphere that is favourable for children’s rest.

(3)(a)

The grass in the natural play garden area had become totally overgrown and the raised beds were not in use. This area required attention in order to render it suitable for children to use over the coming months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The manager stated in the response on the 10 May 2024 that the service had purchased new items for cosy areas in each room, some of these items had arrived and the service was waiting on the remainder to come. Preschool 2 had new bean bag sofa and armchair, Preschool 3 had two bean bags. Further items for the rest areas such as bean bags and mats were on order, the manager submitted receipt from a reputable company dated 7 May 2024 for the purchase of these items.

(3)(a)

The manager stated in the response on 10 May 2024 that the grass in the natural play garden area was cut, and submitted photographic evidence of same. The manager stated also that a regular maintenance person was now employed to maintain this. The service had also made contact with a local men's shed, to build a mud kitchen and sandpit during the summer months.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and invoice submitted

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted on 10 May 2024 was appropriate to address the non-compliances and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection. Therefore, the requirements under Regulation 20 (1)(b) and (3)(a) for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 have been met.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was a healthy eating policy for the service and available on the day of inspection. Since the last inspection a private catering company specializing in meals for children had been procured to provide the main meal of the day and the tea in the afternoon for all children attending the service. There was a weekly menu plan available to parents. Parents continued to provide the snacks. On the day of the inspection the main meal was a beef stew and mashed potatoes, the menu supported any cultural dietary requirements. Drinking water was available to children throughout the day. There was a full catering kitchen on the premises that had ample refrigeration storage for children’s snacks provided by parents

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)
Certification was available which confirmed that six staff in the service had current First Aid Responder training.

(2)(a)(b)

First aid boxes were located out of children’s reach in each care room.

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.*

(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) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 16 April 2024.
 - (b) Firefighting equipment was available on the premises and there was a record demonstrating that it was serviced on 15 March 2024. The smoke alarm system was last serviced on 15 November 2023.

(4)

A notice of procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were on the notice board in the main Hall.