

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016GY012
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Name of Service:	Mothercare Creche
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Address of Service:	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway.
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Eircode:	H62 CX40
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Name of Registered Provider:	Trina Mc Crossan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Heagney & A. Kennedy
Title:	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
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Description of service

This pre-school service is in a detached premises, in the town of Loughrea, Co. Galway. The service operates a full day care service from 7.30hrs to 18.00hrs. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 47 pre-school children, at any one time. There is a 'main playroom' on the ground floor of the main building which was divided into three sections and a 'Montessori room' in a separate building to the rear. There is a designated sleep room in the main building. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the main building. The service is registered for a breakfast club, afterschool programme and holiday camp for 36 school aged children. The school age service operates from rooms on the first floor of the main premises.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily. Eight staff including the registered provider work in the service. Eight staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a student over the age of 18 years, on a childcare work placement, who is supervised when interacting with the children.

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.

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 registered provider, 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 there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The registered provider was the person in charge and on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.
- Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- The eight staff files and the file for the one student over the age of eighteen years on a childcare work placement, were reviewed.
- (2)(a)&(b) Eighteen of the eighteen validated written references on file in respect of the eight staff and the one student, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eight staff and the one student.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that none of the staff or student had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and therefore did not require police vetting.
- (4) Eight staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were 29 children present. All children were aged between 8 months to 5 years. There were six staff directly caring for these children. The registered provider was supernumerary and acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection. Additionally, there was a student over the age of 18 years who was supervised when interacting with the children.
- In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 27 children present. All children were aged between 8 months to 5 years of age. There were seven staff, directly caring for and supervising these children. The registered provider was supernumerary and acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)&(i)

Thirteen children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

The thirteen records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The thirteen children's records contained the following:-

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4)&(5) The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children's records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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.

Compliance Information

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 7th of November 2023, the registered provider advised of the following;

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All children will be changed one by one in the nappy changing room with the door always closed to ensure the privacy of each child. As of now all our pre-school children are in the process of being toilet trained. We have reviewed our nappy changing policy, and all staff are now aware of our new nappy changing policy that is now in place.

Supporting Evidence

1. Evidence of a new designated nappy changing area with a wash hand basin, provided adjacent to the Montessori room, was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The playrooms were designed and arranged to:

- maintain a space that is clean, organised and free of clutter;
 - accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group;
 - divide into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children’s play and learning;
 - give children with additional needs access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities as the other children, to promote their welfare and development.
- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.
 - The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school.
 - The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. Staff encouraged the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child’s needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.
 - The children had access to enough varied materials and equipment, which were rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests and skill levels.
 - Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
 - The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible to the pre-school children.
 - The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.
 - The main playroom was divided into three sections namely 8 months to 1 year, 1-2 years and 2-3 years. Each section was well equipped with a selection of shape sorters, activity gyms, building blocks, stickle bricks, rattles, soft toys, musical toys, jigsaws, and books. There were construction toys, home areas with accessories, a farm with a selection of animals, spinning tops, cars and trucks and a variety of materials to

stimulate the senses. There were art and craft materials such as paints, trays, aprons, playdough, brushes, paper and glitter, shapes, bits, and bobs.

- Displayed on the walls in the main playroom were visual aids, schedules, posters and children’s individual and group artwork, and photographs of the children. Displays included nursery rhymes, children’s handprints, our birthdays. There were mobiles of elephants, windchimes and children’s artwork hanging from the ceiling.
- In the Montessori room, there were play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore were freely available in the service. For examples: open-ended objects such as playdough, construction and building materials such as stacking shapes, pipes, beads, magnets, links, connectors, threading material, pins, suckers, towers, rods, bricks, shape cutters and blocks. There were problem solving items such as insets, puzzles, counters, timers, links, dressing frames, binoculars, magnifying glasses, matching cards, frames, games, and jigsaws. There were measuring and pouring items, such as jugs, scales, and containers. There were role play areas such as kitchens, shops, houses, and construction tables with tools. There were creative play areas with a selection of art and craft materials including crayons, pencils, blackboards, straws, paper, paints, lollipop sticks, stickers, and trays. There were books, animals, dinosaurs, dolls, transport vehicles, dolls, baby baths, potato heads, action figures, and baby baths.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters, educational materials, planners, photographs of the children and children’s artwork. Displays included welcome, Autumn, colours, days of the week, today is, birthdays, our local community, the solar system, lanterns, and emotions. There were handprints, numbers, the alphabet, our family tree, on the farm, timetables, and daily schedules.

(1)(b) There were cosy areas with bean bags, soft floor matting and cushions in the main playroom and the Montessori room. The service had a designated sleep room with six cots. The service had five stackable beds for any older child attending on a part time or full day care basis requiring sleep provision.

(3)(a) Outdoor area

- The service balanced the need for safety with the need to provide physical, challenging experiences for children. The area was secured by walls and covered with grass, concrete and rubber matting surfaces.
- The equipment and materials available in the outdoor play area provided children with play, movement and exploration opportunities that are exclusive to the outdoors.

- The registered provider advised that the outdoor area was an extension of the indoor playrooms and linked with the learning that goes on inside. On the day of inspection, all the children had the opportunity to be outside.
- The equipment and materials in the outdoor play area supported children’s play, movement, and exploration, and provided opportunities exclusive to the outdoors. Materials and items included a basket swing, compost basins, a goal post, footballs, water basins, tree trunks, mud kitchens, slides, and picnic tables. There were planters with plants, and a fairy area with fairies, mushrooms, and little houses. There were playhouses, tractors, push cars, hula hoops, pots, pans, funnels sieves, and racks. There were transport toys, insect hotels, butterfly houses, and tables and chairs.

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

- The service had a healthy eating policy.
- From 7.30hrs to 9.00hrs, the service provided breakfast for any child who was hungry.
- At 10.45hrs, had their snack of fruit pieces, yogurt, crackers, sandwiches, and bread sticks, provided by parents and guardians.
- At 12.30hrs, the children in the main playroom had chicken korma with rice and the children in the Montessori room had spaghetti bolognese which was heated on site.
- At 15.00hrs, the children were offered rice cakes, crackers, yogurts, beans, or spaghetti, provided by the service.
- The premise has its own kitchen and an arrangement where the main meal is supplied by a food delivery company. The service ensures that the meals are stored and cooked on site as per food safety management system based on the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).
- The children attending the service on a full day care and part time basis were offered had two meals and snacks. The registered provider advised that the staff ensured that each meal snack had two food groups and each meal / snack was no more than three hours apart. The registered provider advised that there was a supply of food in the kitchen, for any child requiring additional food.
- The crockery, plates and drinking utensils were suitable for the age and stages of development.

- A drinks shelf was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to 'self-serve' their drinks.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in designated fridges in each playroom.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Powdered infant formula for one child in the main playroom, was not prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) best practice guidance, which advises that powdered infant formula should be made up at home. Staff advised that they made up bottles on site, as per parents preference.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 7th of November 2023, the registered provider advised of the following;

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. We have now informed all new and existing parents that bottles must be premade at home in accordance with the (FSAI).

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Evidence of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) best practice guidance provided to parents and guardians, was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 22 has been adequately addressed.

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:

- There was a buzzer access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.

- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows had restrictive access devices as a safety precaution.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The registered provider clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk to the pre-school child.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- There was a designated nappy changing area with a designated wash hand basin. On the day of inspection, fifteen children wore nappies. These children were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Staff advised that currently no child used a soother.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchen, main playroom, and Montessori room, for the storage of perishable foods.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The registered provider had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness. At 13.40hrs, five children from the main playroom were observed sleeping. The inspectors observed that staff stayed in the sleep room to settle the children to sleep. The children in the Montessori room had relaxation, chill out time.
- There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements, as per the 'safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy'.
- A pod thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in labelled containers.
- Rest quiet areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chose to.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, the door into the kitchen, the storage area, the staff toilets, and the designated staff area had no system of security and or were left open and thereby accessible to the children.
2. There were three storage press doors in the 2 - 3 years section, of the main playroom with the hinges loose and thereby could pose a potential safety concern.
3. The inspectors observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff did not record the physical checking of sleeping children every 10 minutes. On the day of inspection, records for each sleeping child were recorded only once per day, rather than every 10 minutes while the child was sleeping.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Kitchen, staff toilets, storage areas, staff cloakroom, all now have inaccessible keys on the hooks beside each door. We have held a staff meeting to ensure the importance of locking the doors when not in use.
2. The storage press doors are now secure, we have replaced the broken hinges with new hinges. We plan to remove these press doors to provide for open storage.
3. When made aware that we need to record every sleeping child every 10 minutes, we rectified our documentation practice.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of a system of security (key on high inaccessible to children hook) beside the door into the kitchen, the storage area, the staff toilets, and the designated staff area was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the storage press doors in the 2 - 3 years section, of the main playroom with replaced the hinges was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of a sleep record for a sleeping child, completed every 10 minutes was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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 staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of a current paediatric first aid qualification.
- (2)(a) Three suitably equipped first aid bags were available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.
- (b) The first aid bags were readily available, with content items within date.

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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 9th of October 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment and smoke and fire detection system was dated 1st of December 2022.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, which was for a full day care service for 71 pre-school children and 36 school aged children and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.