

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017SO501
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Name of Service:	Hopes And Dreams
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Address of Service:	Unit 4 Cartron Village, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 X027
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Casey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Hopes and Dreams is one of two privately owned services operated by the registered provider. Care and education is provided to children aged between 3 and 6 years on a sessional basis. The service operates from 9:00hrs to 12:00hrs each weekday on a school calendar basis. Hopes and Dreams operates from a purposely adapted commercial unit and is located within Carton Village in Sligo. The premises consists of one large open plan care room and an outdoor play area is available to the rear of the service with artificial grass and natural bark.

Staffing

The service employs five staff members who work directly with the preschool children this includes the registered provider.

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, 15, 19, 23, 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(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) (b).

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

(2) (a) (b).

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

Ten 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 five adults employed in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five 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 longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Five 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

A basic disclosure and not the required international child protection certificate was provided for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider in a written response proposed the following action:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The correct required international child protection certificate has been applied for.

A basic disclosure will not suffice in future. The correct required international child protection certificate will be applied for.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliance has been reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate. 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.

(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 five adults working directly with 13 children on 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 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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

(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-i)

Thirteen records of the preschool children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and details of the child's general practitioner, were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations

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 care room was colourfully decorated with the children's artwork, family pictures and educational posters. Resources and play based materials were stored in open shelving at the children's height throughout the care room facilitating choice of play for the preschool child. Low level children's tables and chairs were provided throughout for tabletop activities and snack times. The room had various interest areas established to stimulate imagination and create areas of interest. A library area was provided where children could relax with a book or opt out of an activity. A home corner with a kitchen and play equipment provided opportunities for role play. A construction area with cars, and diggers provided opportunities for developing imagination.

An array of Montessori based resources of puzzles and tabletop activities provided learning opportunities and aided fine motor skill dexterity. The outdoor area provided opportunities for gross motor skill development with climbing blocks and foot balls. A mud kitchen in the outdoor area allowed for role play and imaginative play. A review of the children’s learning journals found evidence of individual observations and goal planning. Learning outcomes for the preschool child created a well-rounded picture of each individual child, identifying tasks that have been achieved and areas that required continued development. Many of the children attending the preschool service are new to the community and the service took measures to support children to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, while also encouraging the children to learn about different cultures and be respectful of differences. This was done by speaking the various languages and celebrating various culture events ensuring all children were included. Posters on the wall of the preschool, celebrated international cultural awareness.

(1) (b)

Healthy eating is promoted in the service and all snacks are provided from home are in line with the healthy eating policy including yoghurt, fruit, crackers, cheese and sandwiches. Sufficient time was given to the children to enjoy their snacks, meals were not rushed, and staff used this time as an opportunity for social discussion, asking the children their plans for the weekend.

The majority of the children attending the preschool service are toilet trained and independence is promoted, staff were observed to prompt if required. Toilet training is based on the child’s development level and readiness to start rather than their age, and staff work closely with parents and guardians to support this training and readiness for school.

The staff were observed to be kind and gentle in their interactions with the preschool child. In tabletop activities, staff were observed to encourage and offer praise and recognition of completion of the task at hand, this encouragement promotes confidence in the preschool child. One child who was upset at the beginning of the day was nurtured and comforted by the staff ensuring they were happy and supported to remain in the session.

Throughout the session staff were observed to interact positively with all children using soft tones, getting down to the child’s level and making eye contact, therefore ensuring the child was comfortable.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance to the service was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival. A bell entry system ensured entry was not approved without the authorisation of the person in charge.
- The preschools perimeter in the outdoor area consisted of high-level concrete fencing and a gate ensuring safety.
- The kitchenette was inaccessible to the preschool child by means of a wooden gate.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of the reach of the preschool child.
- Childrens snacks were stored in a fridge on arrival to the service in the morning.

Infection Control:

- Tables were cleaned after messy play and prior to snack times.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for safe hand hygiene. Children were encouraged to wash hands prior to snack times and after messy play or using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered on the day of inspection. On interview staff were knowledgeable of the medication policy.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the building.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not provide an adequate nappy changing unit, resulting in staff members using a changing mat on the floor to change the children. This poses a manual handling risk to staff.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider proposed the following actions:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The child in question is potty trained but the staff members were not informed. There are no other children in nappies currently. The service will provide an adequate nappy changing unit, which will be located just outside the toilet.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed by the inspectorate and accepted. This will be reviewed on next inspection. This regulation is now complaint.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The registered provider ensured that the service had measures in place to complete monthly fire evacuation drills. The most recent fire evacuation drill took place on the 26th of April 2024.

(b)

A list of all firefighting equipment was recorded in the service with the most recent annual maintenance date of the 20th of December 2023.

(2) (c)

These records were made available on the day to the inspector for review.

(3)

The registered provider is aware of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for a period of five years.

(4)

A fire evacuation procedure notice was clearly displayed in the care room.

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 a sessional service for 22 preschool children up until the 27th of March 2025.