

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017TY504
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Name of Service:	Monard Kids Club
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Address of Service:	An Chuir, Monard, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	N/A
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Mahony
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	08/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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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

Monard Kids Club was opened in 2017, in the rural village of Monard, Tipperary. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years old, with the majority availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme.

The service, while registered to provide part time care, is currently operating for sessional hours only from 9:15am to 12:30pm.

This purpose-built single storey premises has two early years room, sanitary accommodation, kitchen, auxiliary spaces and an outdoor play area. A registered school aged service is also provided onsite.

Staffing

The service currently employs eight staff members who work directly with children. The registered provider occasionally works directly with children in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the shooting stars room.

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)(b)(c) The service manager was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer, health and safety officer and designated liaison person for example.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the eight staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 27 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 7 staff.

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

Information for parents was available in several locations, namely: parent’s handbook provided to new families entering the service, on information notice boards, in the services policies and procedures, via email and the service communication application.

The information provided to parents proposing to register their children in the service included: the details of staff members, the age profile of children who the service caters for, class of service and the hours which are on offer. Details of the services policies and procedures and adult to child ratios. Details of the facilities and the programme of activities and care provided were available and accessible to proposed parents.

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

(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 indoor areas were bright, warm, and homely, this was achieved using natural materials and neutral colours. Children’s identity and belonging was fostered through the display of works of art and their recent learning. Each child had a dedicated storage cubby for arts and crafts. They had freedom of choice to place their craft on the display board, in their scrapbook or to bring them home.

Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based and

Montessori based materials were in the main classroom space such as small world play, messy play zone, fine motor and manipulative play, a construction area and library. An adjoining space was used for role play and had areas for play such as the hairdressers, a baby care area, dress up, kitchen and dolls house.

Children's literacy development was promoted with a well laid out library area. Books, dress up materials and puppets were available for use by the children. The messy play area ensured children had free access to sensory play resources such as pasta, rice and mouldable sand. Individual 'messy mats' were designed by each child and laminated for ease of use during messy play activities. A large selection of arts and crafts materials were freely accessible to children in multiple areas of the room. A large painting easel, moveable craft trolley and writing station provided ample opportunity for children to engage creative expression.

Both classrooms had direct access to the outdoor play area where children were observed to engage in a range of activities. The all-weather surface was partially sheltered with a large canopy. Wheeled toys and tricycles were available for use. A large mud kitchen equipped provided opportunity to engage in role play and messy play. Children were observed to use a slide, playhouse, chalk boards, hoppers and climbing opportunities. While most children engaged in self-directed play, a small group activity of soccer was supported by a staff member.

(b)

The service provided morning snack which was prepared onsite, a selection of fresh fruit and crackers were served on the day of inspection. Extra portions were available if required. The service provided snack was optional and some children brought a packed lunch from home and were observed to retrieve these from the refrigerator in the classroom. Drinks were freely accessible to the children throughout the morning, a drinks station was available on a low-level shelf. Some children had their own drinks beakers, and a jug of water and cups were also available for children to self-serve if needed. Staff sat with children and engaged in conversation during the morning snack.

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) There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 02 February 2024.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 01 September 2023 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 10 January 2024.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed beside each emergency exit door on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for a sessional preschool for 33 children. The insurance policy was amended on 12 September 2023 changing the service type from part time to sessional and will expire 27 March 2024.