

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2018LS504

Name of Service: Maples at Stradbrook

Address of Service: Stradbrook, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

Eircode: R32TKX4

Name of Registered Provider: Monica Delaney

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 06/08/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Molloy
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

Description of service

This service is a privately operated service located in an apartment complex in the town of Portlaoise. The service operates from the ground floor and has been operated by this registered provider since 2018. The premises is used for the sole purpose of operating an early years' service. The service is registered to accommodate preschool children from 0 to 6 years on a full day care, part time and sessional basis and operates each day from 08.00 am to 18.00 pm Monday to Friday.

An enclosed outdoor secure playground is provided to the back of the service. The service consists of, two playrooms, the preschool room and the baby room, an office, a kitchen, a designated sleeping room, a store room, five sanitary accommodations and wash hand basins, and a staff toilet. An entrance hall reception area and greeting point which opens directly from the main front entrance.

Car parking and set down is to the front of the service.

Staffing

The inspection was facilitated by the person in charge. There were five adults present including the person in charge on site on the day.

All staff hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 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 safety premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of child.

The scope of the inspection included the sessional play room, the sanitary accommodation, the sleeping room, and the outdoor play facility.

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. 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.

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.

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was present during the inspection and facilitated the inspection. The roster showed that at all times the person in charge or deputy was present during the opening hours of the service.
- (2)
- Five staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.
- (a) (b) Validated references from staff members past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review. Validated references from reputable sources were available for review.
- (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 from other police authorities was not required .
- (3)
- Required vetting had been carried out prior to adults being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4)
- Staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (6)(a)(b)

Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before June 30, 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

No employee was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Scheme

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)

The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children throughout the opening hours of the service and five staff including the registered provider were on site.

(2)

From the review of the records, it was noted that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained, and records showed that the adult child ratio was maintained in the service.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times, this was reflected in the staff rosters

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered providers had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person

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*

Compliance Information

Basic Need

A varied nutritious diet was provided with fresh meals cooked on site each day . A three-week menu was on display. The main meal of the day was chicken pasta and vegetables, water and milk and fresh fruit were also served at mealtimes.

Childrens nappies were changed as needed and nappy changing was in line with correct infection control requirements and good practice.

A staff member remained in the sleeping room to observe sleeping children and make sleep records.

Supporting Relationships.

Staff remained constant and children could know who would look after them each day. Children appeared relaxed in the setting and in the company of the staff who were familiar with the children's needs. Siblings were facilitated to meet up and be together during the day. Parents received regular updates on their children's progress at hand over times and at individual meetings with the registered provider. Birthdays and events were celebrated. The family wall displayed photos of children and their families a celebration was held on site each year at term

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:

A system of controlled entry was in place at the front door which was operated by means of a buzzer from within the service. This system could prevent unauthorised entry or exit of a child unsupervised.

Access to the kitchen was restricted .

Cleaning, and sanitising products and equipment were stored in a designated locked cupboard out of reach of children.

A system of pest control was in place and no activity had been recorded.

Infection Control:

Overall, the premises was clean, and floors and surfaces were well maintained.

Staff were familiar with the infection control policy and parents had been issued with an up-to-date copy.

In the nappy changing facility aprons, gloves nappy bags, wipes, paper towels, and dispensing liquid soap were supplied for use in nappy changing

Children were observed washing their hands and adults were observed reminding children and offering assistance if necessary .

The playrooms and sanitary accommodation were clean and well maintained and a cleaning rota was available for review.

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medication management policy had been devised and was available in the service.

Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication and correct storage of medicines.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection

Safe Sleep:

Staff were aware of best sleep practices, physically monitored sleeping children, carried out and recorded sleeping checks. Safe sleeping checks including child's colour, position and breathing were recorded by the staff. A staff member remained in the room with the sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.

The fire exits were fitted with exit display signage.

A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point outside the building.

Outing:

The person in charge stated that no outings are conducted from the service.

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) Staff had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available in the service at all times

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.
- (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)

A written record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on July 17, 2024.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced in January 10, 2024 and fire equipment was also checked on January 10, 2024.

(2)

The record was available open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.

(3)

The person in charge stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service was available .The insurance cover was valid until March 2025.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The person in charge facilitated the inspection and provided access to information as was required for completion of the inspection .