

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018SO504
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Name of Service:	Bright Minds
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Address of Service:	Avalon Community Centre, Chapel Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 RF78
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michael Travers
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	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

Bright Minds is a sessional service based in the centre of Sligo town. It is governed by a local charity organisation, The Avalon Centre CLG. It caters for a maximum of twenty-two children at any one time. Hours of operation are from 09.15am-12.15pm, weekdays. It is open for 38 weeks from September- June. The Avalon Centre which is the premises containing the Bright Minds facility is situated in the heart of Sligo town. The area allocated to the Bright Minds service incorporates one spacious indoor playroom and access to a sensory room. An outdoor play area is accessible directly from the playroom. Sanitary accommodation and laundry facilities are readily accessible off the playroom. A kitchen off the playroom is currently not in use.

Staffing

Two staff members are employed directly by the service to care for the preschool children. Both adults hold major award at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. An additional three adults who are employed on a community employment scheme work 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 26. 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*
- (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).

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 all five adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory notice to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for four adults in the service as they had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Four adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education ranging from level 5 to level 9 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

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.

(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)

There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were two adults working directly with the twelve preschool children in the morning of the unannounced inspection. There were an additional three adults employed under a community employment scheme present in the room.

(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.

(8) (a)

The registered provider demonstrated that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-g-i)

Eleven records of the children attending the preschool were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and consent for medical treatment was completed for the eleven children

(3) (a)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (h)

Four records did not adequately record immunisations, if any, received by the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response submitted by the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider:

As soon as the inspector left our preschool, I contacted parents regarding the records of immunisations whose records were not adequate or missing and asked them to fill in the missing details as well I asked for a copy of their vaccination's passports/records.

In the future I will ask all the parents for a copy of their immunisation's records prior to the start in preschool.

Parents will be reminded to attach copy of the vaccination records together with the enrolment forms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 service operated out of a large care room with access to a large sensory room if required throughout the session. The care room is adequately laid out with various interest areas to stimulate the mind of the preschool child. The walls in the care room are decorated with the children's artwork which adds colour to the space. The children are encouraged to direct their own play and were observed on the day moving freely from one interest area to another. Interest areas included a home corner equipped with kitchen and resources, tables and chairs and dress up area for role play. Construction areas with tractors, cars, trucks and building blocks for imaginative play. A large library was available for language development with a variety of books. Open low-level shelving stocked with puzzles and tabletop activities allowed for problem solving and fine motor skill development. Sensory tables with water and sand supported hand and eye coordination with scooping, pouring and measuring toys. Arts and crafts were available with the children observed to be playing with playdough and paint on the day.

The sensory room provided time away from the busy care room. This room was equipped with soft matting, bean bags, ball ponds and swings. Lighting was low, with bubble lamps providing calming and restful lighting. This area was used effectively on the day where children could rest and self-regulate if required.

The outdoor space consisted of two accessible areas. To the front of the building, swings and slides allowed for gross motor skill development. To the rear of the property a second outdoor space was available with mud kitchens, sensory tables and opportunities for planting flowers. Two picnic benches are available for lunch outdoors in good weather.

All children in attendance in the service had a journal which documented their journey. These included observations of the children's individual learning and development. The service had taken measures to ensure inclusion of all cultures and diversities and had translated many of the children's observations where English was not the families first language to ensure the family could be aware of the children's progression. Photographs of the children's families were placed on low level shelving accessible to the children to maintain the family connection.

(1) (b)

The children brought in their lunches from home and had access to their lunch whenever they choose. A rolling lunch was in place, where children sat to eat their lunch when they were ready. Lunches included brioche, a variety of fruits and wraps. A visual social story displayed on the wall of the service highlighted the services healthy eating policy and advised what was appropriate to bring to school. The service took measures to ensure all children and adults understood the routines and expectations in the service by displaying visual prompts as English may not be the first language for many of the service users. Visual prompts of hand washing, fire evacuation, healthy eating was displayed throughout the service to assist. Independence was promoted and children were encouraged to toilet independently while being supervised from a distance. Support was given to those children who required assistance when toileting. The staff members on the day were observed to be gentle and kind in their approach, the children appeared happy and content in their company, seeking staff members out for hugs and affection. Staff members were observed to use praise and recognition as children completed tasks, encouraging positive behaviour. The atmosphere was calm and relaxed.

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 into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to snack time and after messy play in the snack room.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning checklists and risk assessments in place.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks, after messy play, after playing outside and after using the toilet.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins to facilitate effective hand hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- The service did not administer medication. As discussed with staff if a child is sick, the parent or guardian is contacted to collect the child from the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed on the wall in the care room.
- Fire evacuation doors remained clear and unobstructed on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- (1) The bin in the care room was not the required foot operated lidded bin which resulted in a risk of cross contamination. It is acknowledged that the service replaced this bin after the inspection.
- (2) The nappy bin in the sanitary accommodation did not have the required foot operated pedal, resulting in a risk of cross contamination. It is acknowledged that the service replaced this bin after the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

In a written response from the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider:

1. As soon as the EY inspector left our preschool, I bought the required foot operated lidded bin and sent a photo to the inspector. In the future we will make sure that the bin in the main preschool room will always be foot operated lidded bin in order to prevent any risk of cross contamination.

2. As soon as the EY inspector left our preschool, I bought the required foot operated lidded bin and sent a photo to the inspector. In the future we will make sure that the bin in the main preschool room will always be foot operated lidded bin in order to prevent any risk of cross contamination

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographs of foot operated pedal bin submitted.
2. Photograph of the foot operated nappy bin submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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) The registered provider ensured there was a person always trained in First aid responder available to the children. On the day three adults had the required first aid responder training with an expiry date of November 2025 and June 2026.

(2) (a) (b)

A fully stocked first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location and accessible if required to the preschool child.

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) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that fire evacuation drills take place monthly in the service with the most recent evacuation drill of the 30th of September 2024.

A record of all firefighting equipment was available with a record of the most recent maintenance service of the 9th of September.

(2) (c)

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

(3)

The person in charge is aware of the responsibility to retain these records for a period of five years in line with regulation.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures in writing and visual social story were displayed on the walls of the care room to facilitate safe evacuation from the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated the preschool service was adequately insured up until the 8th of October 2025.