

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019WD001
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Name of Service:	Small Beginnings
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Address of Service:	Sea Breeze, Coxtown, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 HC78
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Glody
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

This sessional service is located just outside the village of Dunmore East in Co Waterford. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 1.00pm for 38 weeks of the year. The premises is a detached building situated in the grounds of the registered provider's home. The service consists of a preschool room, toilets, an office area, and an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff employed in the service. All staff working directly with the children held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4)

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

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*

(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)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were four staff employed in the service. All files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were six written and validated references available on file from past employers, and two written and validated references from reputable sources.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all four staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as none of the staff had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

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 at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service.
- (3)
At 11.00am there were 20 children in the care of 3 staff.

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

- (1)(a)
The manager ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together and enjoying circle time together. Children were given different daily jobs to do. There was a list of jobs displayed such as handing out work, first in line to go outside, sweeping the floor and ringing the bell.

There was a photo of the child beside the assigned job, so they were clear on their daily tasks in the service. Children had also made Mother's Day cards in the service. The cards were drying on a rack suspended over the classroom.

Children were observed to be encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, by tidying up and dressing themselves to go and play outside. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they encouraged the children to take responsibility for their own belongings. Of particular note was a system where children had a slotted shelf unit where they could store their artwork.

At snack time staff used the opportunity to chat to the children. Staff were observed to encourage the children to take turns telling their stories while also encouraging the children to take the time to listen to what the other children were saying. The snacks provided by parents were observed to be healthy and varied on the day of inspection. Children had avocado, pasta, tuna and a range of various cut up fruit and vegetables to eat.

One of the children was celebrating their birthday. Their name was written on the blackboard in the classroom. Children shared a birthday cake and sang happy birthday. The children and staff were observed to be kind and caring making the birthday child the centre of attention during the celebration.

Children were observed playing in the outdoor area. This area overlooks the sea. Children were watching a large boat which was anchored nearby. There were three areas where the children could play. The area directly beside the service had a soft ground cover. There was also a roofed area where children could play even if it was raining. This area was well resourced with swings and ride on bikes. There was a second area with stones and small digging equipment for children who enjoyed digging. There was another area which was grassed for children to play in. The children were given choice of movement in the service. For example, some children choose to stay inside and read their books while the other children played outside.

The materials and equipment available were well organised and easily accessible to children. Of particular note were the areas of interest which were well developed and resourced in the service. The room was laid out to facilitate free play for the children. There was a large comfortable pink couch for children to rest on during the day. There was a selection of reading books for the children to look at on shelves beside the couch.

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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

The service is located in the garden of the registered provider's home. Access to the service was gained through the front door of the service. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves that were inaccessible to children. All fire exit doors were unobstructed.

Infection control:

The service appeared clean on the day of inspection. Hand washing was observed in the service. Children were observed being supported by staff to wash their hands with the support of the staff. Liquid soap, disposable hand towels and pedal bins were available.

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)
There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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.
- (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 that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in the service in February 2024.

(b) There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in July 2023, and the smoke alarm in February 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.