

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020MO004				
Name of Service:	Making Memories Pre school				
Address of Service:	The Maples, Hazelhill, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo				
Eircode:	F35 KW99				
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Carty				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	31/05/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>16</td> <td>PM</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	AM	16	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Making Memories Pre-School is a sessional service in a residential area of Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo. The service is registered to provide services to children aged from two to six years of age, from 9:30 to 12:30 hours. The service is located a section of a building that was purpose built for childcare provision. At the time of the inspection the service was using two playrooms known as the Pines and Maples playrooms and an additional room linking one of the playrooms to the outdoor area. The service also has a large lobby area, kitchen, sanitary facilities and an office. The service is registered to provide school aged services.

Staffing

There are six staff in the service including relief staff and the registered provider who works directly with 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 25, 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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) (a) (b) (c) (d)

The inspector was informed by the registered provider that that there were six staff working in the service at the time of the inspection. It was confirmed that the vetting documentation for five staff had been reviewed during previous inspection processes in the service and were compliant under this regulation. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the staff member new to the service since the last focused inspection of the 26 April 2023:

(a) Two written validated references from past employers including their most recent employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Vetting documents showed that international police vetting was not required for the new staff member.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the staff new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the preschool children.

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) During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. On the inspector's announced arrival to the service there were 3 adults working directly with 16 children. An additional staff member arrived later in the session bringing the number of adults present to four.
- (3) The minimum ratio for sessional services providing care to children over 2 ½ years of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 3 to 4 adults working directly with 16 children during the inspection.

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-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

Ten of the children's records were selected for review across children attending both of the playrooms. The information required under the regulation was available in the children's records.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was made readily available for inspection by the registered provider on request.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

- (h) The full name of the children attending the Pines playroom were not recorded on the child attendance record with first names only recorded.
- (i) There was no written record of daily staff rosters made available for inspection in the service and no evidence provided to show that the staff recorded their attendance in the service daily. These non-compliances were also found on the most recent focused inspection in the service on the 26 April 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (h) A new attendance record book has been purchased for use by staff in the playroom. The use of the attendance record book will ensure this will not reoccur in the future.
- (i) The new attendance record book includes a staff attendance/roster section which will be completed daily going forward. The registered provider will sign off on the record book weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

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 door at the front of the service had securing mechanisms in place to prevent unauthorised entry to the area and children from leaving unnoticed. This door was secured by the staff member who had been authorising the access of children once children had entered the service. The door remained secured throughout the inspection. Parents collected their children at the end of the session at the gates to the sides of the outdoor area. The gates had securing mechanism in place to allow staff to control access to the outdoor area. The internal doors in the playroom and leading to the sanitary area had securing mechanisms controlled by the staff. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchenette out of reach of children in the Maples playroom. The play equipment available to the children was in good condition and suitable for the developmental stages of the children using it. There was a room in the premises available to store some of the outdoor play equipment. The outdoor waste bins were inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Disposable aprons and gloves were available for use by staff during nappy changes in the nappy changing unit beside the Pines playroom. A sealable, foot pedal operated bin was available for staff to dispose of nappies. Separate storage was provided for children's personal items including nappies. Playroom windows with window restrictors in place where appropriate were opened at times to ventilate the rooms. Tables were cleaned down by staff following art activities in the Pines playroom.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication observed to be administered to a child during the inspection.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were found to be free from obstruction throughout the inspection with a notice identifying the fire assembly point at the rear of the building.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for six staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Sections of the black underlay in the gravelled section of the outdoor area were exposed and posed a potential tripping hazard.

Infection Control:

3. The wall vent in the nappy changing unit off the Pines playroom was dusty and required cleaning.
4. There were no up-to date cleaning records available in the service.
5. The water emitted from the hot taps in children's sanitary unit was not warm and did not meet the requirements for the provision of handwashing facilities. This was also non-compliant on the most recent focused inspection of the 26 April 2023.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider advised that:

General Safety:

1. The service will setup a digital reminder to alert staff when vetting renewals are due and the registered provider will check this every two month. The staff member is no longer working in the service.
2. The underlay has been properly secured and a roll of artificial grass has been ordered to cover the area. The staff have added that the underlay is to be checked to the outdoor area daily safety check list.

Infection Control:

3. The vent has been cleaned. The cleaning of the vent is now listed on weekly cleaning record sheet. The registered provider is to check this and sign off weekly.
4. The manager is to check and ensure cleaning records are updated daily.
5. An automatic timer clock is installed which is set to heat and control water temperature. The staff are no longer reliant on the heating system to heat the water.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the actions taken was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has satisfactorily addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

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 evidence of training in First Aid for children available for one of the staff members present during the inspection dated for the 30 August 2025.
- (2)
 - (a) There was a large suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the kitchenette of the Maples playroom.
 - (b) The first aid equipment was readily available at all times should a child require first aid treatment in the 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) Records of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were made available for inspection by the registered provider. The smoke/fire alarm system was maintained on

the 6 February 2024 and the firefighting equipment was maintained on the 5 July 2023 according to the records provided.

- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were on display in the playrooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) Written records of fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by staff however the fire drills were conducted on a two monthly basis and not monthly as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

- (a) The staff have developed a new fire drill record sheet with a monthly column to ensure drills are carried out and recorded correctly every month.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the fire drill template.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has satisfactorily addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance for the maximum number of children registered to attend sessional services in the premises was available for inspection valid until the 27 March 2025.