

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021SO002
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Name of Service:	Sligo Springboard CLG
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Address of Service:	33 Caltragh Crescent, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 P6XN
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Name of Registered Provider:	Clara Meehan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	No.
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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

Sligo Springboard CLG is located in a community building in a residential area of Sligo town. The service caters for children in the age range of 2 years and 8 months to 5 years between the hours of 9.30 am and 12.30pm for a maximum of 22 children. The building consists of an entrance hallway, one playroom, large storeroom, cleaning storeroom and a kitchen directly off the playroom. Sanitary accommodation for both children and staff working in the service is located off the entrance hallway and an outdoor play area is available at the side and back of the building.

Staffing

The service is staffed by 3 adults who have certification in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5,6 and 8 in childcare. The registered provider does not work directly within the preschool.

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 9, 11, 15, 20, 23, 27 and 28.

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,

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b)

The service had a person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b)

Three adults are employed in the service and all three files were reviewed. Four verified past employer references and two verified references from another source were available in respect of all three adults employed in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three adults employed in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early years inspectorate regulatory notice by renewing garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for the one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six months or more.

(4) Three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above 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 was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children on the morning of the unannounced inspection. Three adults provided direct care to eleven preschool children.

(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) The registered provider ensured that at least two adults were available in the service during the operation hours of the service.

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.*

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

(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.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a-g)

The service demonstrated adequate records of the preschool children attending the service in relation to the contact details of parent or guardian, details of general practitioner and authorisation to collect from the preschool.

(2)

The service demonstrated that adequate records were maintained as specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

(3) (c)

These records were made available for the authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (h)

The service did not demonstrate adequate records of children's immunisation history.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Registration forms have been updated to include adequate records of children's immunisation history.

Supporting documentation submitted

Registration form submitted to include immunisation history.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The service operated out of a community building with one large playroom. There were adequate and suitable indoor play facilities available in the room. The care room presented as bright and visually appealing with evidence of the children’s learning journey displayed on the walls adding colour. The room was set up in an orderly manner with various interest areas. These interest areas included construction area, home corner, arts and crafts, dress up area. Children were observed to move around this area freely directing their own sense of play. Open low-level shelving equipped with building blocks, magnets, table top activities, puzzles and jigsaws enabled toys and resources to be easily accessible to the preschool children.

Child size tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and mealtimes.

(1) (b)

A rest area was provided in the sessional service, providing a space where children can opt out of an activity and relax. This area had a child size red sofa and soft matting with access to a library of books.

(2) (b)

The outdoor area was located to the back and side of the service building. One area was covered to ensure accessibility to the outdoors could be facilitated in all weathers. The outdoor area was adequately equipped with mud kitchens, climbing frames, sensory tables, wooden T-pee and a wooden play car.

The floor coverings in the outdoor area contained a mix of natural materials with grass, supplemented with concrete and shock absorbing flooring.

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.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure.

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 mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in the care rooms.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Evidence of the service maintenance of firefighting equipment was displayed and in date.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service Kitchen remained accessible for preschool children throughout the inspection. The Kitchen had items such as kettles, cookers, cleaning materials and cutlery which if accessed by preschool children could pose a risk of safety.
2. A gate lock in the outdoor area was broken, resulting in waste and bait boxes being accessible to preschool children which could pose a risk of safety.
3. The outdoor play area had evidence of waste including sweet wrappers, tinfoil and household waste. This waste could pose a safety risk to preschool children.

- Lunches brought in from home which included perishable items were not stored appropriately in a refrigerator. All perishable items such as yoghurts should be stored in a fridge at the correct temperature.

Infection Control:

- Floor covering in the sanitary accommodation of both the children and adults' sanitary area was flaking with large amounts of the floor cover worn away. Therefore, making cleaning ineffective and posing an infection control risk.
- The sofa in the rest area of the room was torn and damaged with exposed foam, making the sofa difficult to clean effectively posing a risk of infection control.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The kitchen is now locked. The Kitchen door lock has been added to the daily risk assessment. Lock to be always closed when kitchen not in use.
- The gate lock has been replaced. The gate/fence security to be added to daily risk assessment
- Waste management has been added to daily risk assessment. As the waste is coming from external properties an application will be made to the landlord to allow for higher fencing and the installation of an entrance gate to reduce the possibility of rubbish on the premises. This will be submitted for the April budget.
- Perishable items will be stored in the fridge. Food storage has been added to the daily risk assessment

Infection Control:

- Scheduled repair of painted floor covering to begin 7th January. Floor covering will be added to the maintenance checks and the daily risk assessment.
- The torn part of the sofa has been replaced with appropriate upholstery tape. This will be included in the daily risk assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Risk assessment submitted.
- Risk assessment submitted.
- Risk assessment submitted
- Risk assessment submitted

Infection Control:

5. Work to begin 7th of January
6. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated that adequate supervision was provided on the day of inspection. Three adults supervised 11 preschool children throughout the sessional service. During arts and crafts, the adults sat alongside the children demonstrating the task at hand and supervising the children's activities, prompting and guiding throughout the task. At mealtimes, while one adult prepared snack, the two remaining adults supervised the 11 children. Once snack was ready the adults sat with the children through the meal.

The sanitary accommodation is located across the hallway from the care room and children were observed to use the sanitary accommodation independently while being supervised by both sight and sound.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated that adequate insurance was in place for the preschool sessional service for 22 preschool children up until the 14th of October 2025.