

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023OY001
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Name of Service:	Memory Lane Pre-school
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Address of Service:	12 The Sycamores Edenderry Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 A525
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Pierce
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Service type:	Full day Care, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	05/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	1
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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
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

Memory Lane is a full day care service, which also operates as it as a part time and sessional service. The service is located in a housing estate in the town of Edenderry in rural Co. Offaly. The service caters for children in the age range from 2 year to 6 years and operates from 7.00am to 7.00 pm from Monday to Friday. The premises was originally purpose built and designed for sole use as an early years' service. Part of this premises is now used as a domestic dwelling. The remainder is used for the purpose of carrying on an early years' service.

The part of the premises used as an early years' service has an entrance hall, one large open plan playroom designated for use by the preschool children and is also use as a sleeping facility. There are three toilets and a nappy changing facility. The service has use of the owners kitchen.

Parking and set down for parents are available on the public road.

Staffing

Three staff in addition to the registered provider were present and working directly with the children attending this early years' service.

All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels, 5 to 6 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 announced as it was the initial inspection of this service 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.

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

(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, as far 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 designated person in charge were present during the inspection and facilitated the inspection and the roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

All 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) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all-staff member was available for review.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was not required for staff members.

(3)

Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-6 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 staff member was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day of inspection as children were awaiting assessment in relation to inclusion in this 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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children. Records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld in the service.

(2)
The registered provider had ensured that the adult child ratio was correctly maintained throughout the inspection and records showed that sufficient adults were rostered to work in the service each day.

(8)
(a) The records showed that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times as is required

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act

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 provider 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 Needs

Children were observed making their own choices throughout the session, and it was noted that they moved freely around the playroom, and some chose to relax in the rest area.

Different types of play experiences were observed, including games with rules, free play, and sensory play, which supported different aspects of children's development. Children that required additional help and support were given this with one-to-one individualised care, and programme planning.

Healthy eating was promoted, parents supplied healthy food and snack. Water was freely available to the children.

Children were encouraged to become independent as self-caring and were encouraged to take care of their own belongings including hanging up their coats and opening bags and lunch boxes and tidying up their toys when finished playing.

Supporting Relationships

Parents were consulted on the care of their children when attending the service and were involved in individualised care planning. It was observed that the children appeared comfortable and relaxed in the company of staff.

Parents receive updates on their own children's progress including discussion at daily hand over times, where parents have an opportunity to meet with staff and avail of meetings on a one-to-one basis with the manager if they so wish.

Physical and Material Environment.

The pre-school rooms were bright and cheerfully decorated and laid out to meet the needs of the children. Special interest areas were in place and the child sized tables allowed children to sit at their own level when eating lunches and engaging in table top activities.

Children could access their own choice of toys from the low-level shelving at their own eye level.

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 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,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider had ensured -

- (a) having regard to the small number of pre-school children attending the service availing of full day care and part time day care, their respective ages, and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there is adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play in the play room allowing for freedom of movement and, in the outdoor play facility to the back of the service.

(b) Considering the small number of pre-school children presently availing of full day care and part time day care there are adequate and suitable facilities for children to rest during the day on the soft seating provided and on the low beds available for sleeping that can be laid out for sleep in the corner of the play room.,

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:

Entry was controlled by means of a bell, which was operated from within and prevented unauthorised entry and exit of a child unsupervised.

Access to the kitchen and the domestic quarters was restricted.

The outdoor play facility was secure and was accessible directly from the hallway of the setting.

A side entrance was used for access and exit from the setting and children and parents used the side pathway to the door without transversing the staff carpark area.

A system of pest control was in place in the service and records maintained and no evidence of pests had been detected

Infection Control:

Clear guidance on handwashing was outlined for children and staff in the service. Staff and children were observed hand washing and gently reminding children to wash their hands.

Staff were well informed in relation to up to date infection control national guidelines and in particular in relation to potential spread of infection through hand-to-hand contamination.

Good ventilation was observed with openable windows. Surface cleaning was carried out and records were maintained.

Administration of Medication:

A medication policy was available in the service, and it was established through discussion that staff were familiar with the with policy in relation to safe administration of medication.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.

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

Outing:

The registered provider stated that no outings were 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)

The staff members held first aid training and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Three staff held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification.

(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 November 07 2023.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available and was dated June 11 2023.
- Records showed that the fire alarms were serviced on June 02, 2023.
- (2)
- The record was available and open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.
- (3)
- The person in charge stated that records will be 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 in the service.
The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024.

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 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 registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to information as was required for completion of the inspection.