

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2023TY006 |
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| Name of Service: | Totally Kids |
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| Address of Service: | St Michaels Girls National School, St. Michael Street, Tipperary Town, Tipperary. |
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| Eircode: | E34 Y098 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Michelle Quinlan; Therese Roche |
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| Service type: | Part-time, Sessional |
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| Date(s) of Inspection: | 09/11/2023 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 12 | PM | 6 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary. |
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| Inspection undertaken by: | E Cullen |
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| Title: | Early Years Inspector |
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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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

The service commenced operation in September 2023 and provides a part-time and sessional care programme 38 weeks per year. The service operates 8:45am to 1:30pm daily, which includes a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme from 8:45am to 11:45am. The service is located in a prefabricated log cabin structure on the grounds of a national school in Tipperary Town. A dedicated outdoor area is available for sole use of the service. This service is one of two services operated by the registered providers in the Tipperary Town area.

Staffing

There were three adults working directly with children in the service, which included both the registered providers who work onsite daily. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered providers had recently completed specialised training in the delivery of a forest school programme.

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 and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (2)(4) – Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(2)(8) – Staffing levels, 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 as a result, the scope of the inspection included time spent in the indoor and outdoor environments.

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 providers, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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

Documentation was reviewed for the three staff members working in the service.

(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member.

(d) Police vetting was available for two staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that two staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Component certificates were available on file for one staff member. The record did not confirm that the staff member held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at minimum Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

An application was made to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). The service will ensure all documentation is available on file in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Letter of qualification recognition at Level 5 from the DCEDIY.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted meets to requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(2) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 12 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 3 staff.

(8)(a) There were two staff members on the premises during the hours of operation.

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

On arrival at the service the inspector observed children engaged in free play, a sensory slime activity and some children were eating their morning snack. During this period children were observed to make choices about who and what to play with and when they wanted to join their peers at the snack table. A spontaneous story time began when one child also requested a story and several other children joined in. As the numbers of children wishing to have snack increased, additional tables were cleaned and set up for snack. The transition from play to eating was seamless, children decided where they wished to sit and enjoy their snack which was provided by parents and guardians from home. Staff members sat at each table with the children and engaged in conversation with them, support was also provided if children required assistance opening items. There was ample time allocated for children to eat and before snack time was over, a staff member ensured that each child had eaten.

As children finished their snack, the transition to outdoor play began. Staff members supported children to put on their outdoor wet gear, independence was encouraged as children retrieved their belongings from their dedicated storage areas. The outdoor play environment was a natural space with grass and wood chips, a large well equipped mud kitchen was used by many of the children. This space also contained a large sand pit, trellis, tyres and a balance beam. Staff members engaged in outdoor games, one of which was using a portable speaker which dictated a dragon hunt. The register providers detailed plans to further develop the outdoor area including a sheltered area coming in early in the new year.

The indoor environment was warm and homely this was achieved through creative use of net curtains, soft furnishings, plants and fresh flowers. Displays of children's artwork was meaningful and purposeful this included seasonal displays of recent learning and individual drawings displayed in multiple areas of the room the service. There was an emphasis on the use of natural materials such as pinecones, shells and wooden slices of timber. A large selection of wooden play equipment such as a castle, dolls house and kitchen were available for role play.

The well-defined interest areas and labeled open shelving units supported children to make choices about they're learning and play.

Parent and guardian communication during collection and drop off periods, provided an opportunity for staff to share information with parents. Additional methods of communication such as phone calls, use of a messaging application, learning journals and the service's social media were used to share information, pictures and observations.