

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2024DL004 | | |
| Name of Service: | Superstars Childcare | | |
| Address of Service: | Mountcharles Community Centre, Station Rd, Mountcharles, Co. Donegal. | | |
| Eircode: | F94 DFN8 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Orla McDowell | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 12/11/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 7 | PM 7 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92 | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | S Killeen | | |
| 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 Applicabl | | |

Description of service

The services operate from a large open plan room in Mountcharles community centre. The service operates a sessional preschool service between the hours of 09:30 and 12:30, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service is located in a shared room in a community hall on the outskirts of Mountcharles. The service has sanitary accommodation and a designated kitchen. Access to the service is by a bell entry system.

Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person and operates the service single handedly. There is an emergency person who is familiar with the service available if required.

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/ 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 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

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named emergency contact person if required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.

(2)

The files of the registered provider were reviewed. The following vetting information was available for 1 adult:

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers for one adult.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained the registered provider and emergency contact person. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

One of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, 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)-*
 - c) *a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was an adequate number of adults observed working directly with the children during the inspection process.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that on the day of inspection, the adult to child ratio was always maintained at the minimum specified ratios.
- (8) (c) On the day of the inspection one staff member cared for the children singlehandedly. An emergency person was available nearby to provide support if needed in the event of an emergency.

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

19 (1) (a)

- There was adequate food and drink parents provided the snack for their children from home. The service encouraged parents to choose healthy options through their healthy eating policy children's snacks on the day consisted of scones fruit cheese Yoghurt ham cheese sandwiches and water milk. Hydration station with the children's individual beakers available to the children throughout the session.
- Children could access the toilet independently in accordance with their individual needs. Child friendly hand-washing posters were placed in the toilets to promote correct hand washing. Good general hygiene practises were observed, and staff supervise children when they washed their hands to ensure that this was effectively carried out.
- Basic hygiene practice was observed on the day. The service provided protective plastic aprons were for Messy and space clothes were available for the children if needed.
- Children were observed starting their morning with yoga stretches and movement. After this group activity, the routine moved into free play, giving the children the chance to pick what they wanted to do. They were able to move around freely and choose between the different interest areas in the room, which allowed them to lead their own play and stay active.

- The Staff member presence used positive methods for guiding and correcting the children's behaviour when they became upset or frustrated, staff member was observed telling children, “We need “to be nice to our friends” and reminding one child that they could have a piece of play material when the timer went off. Children were observed to be encouraged to negotiate amongst themselves.
- Warm, positive interactions were consistently observed between the staff member and the children. The staff was observed engaging with the children at eye level. The children were observed and encouraged to talk about their homes, families, pets, birthdays, and personal interests. These interactions promoted strong relationships and a sense of security. The children were observed proudly telling stories about their farms at home grandparents and siblings in the school next to the service. Children interacted positively with one another, sharing resources and engaging in cooperative play.
- Children were offered a sense of belonging through the provision of individually named places for their belonging personal belongings and by displays of artwork and photos of each child with their families.
- Children's language, development and communication skills were supported through the positive interactions an ongoing conversation observed during the session and throughout storytelling, music and nursery rhymes that formed part of their play routine. The changing themes in the curriculum provided opportunities for the children to increase their vocabulary and expand their language.
- The large playroom was comfortable, inviting a suitable space for preschool children. The home corner and shop area were well resourced with appropriate items to engage children in play and included some authentic packs cereal shampoo containers milk cartons etc. Small electric cooker was used to give children the experience of baking/ cooking along with washing machine, sink, and tumble dryer.
- The lower area of the room had comfortable child size seating beside the library area. This area also had a dress up area with a mirror and a vanity of accessories.
- The sensory area consisted of magnetic sand-sand and water play. These areas changed from time to time to include Jelly, pasta etc. The transport area consisted of a large variety of transport vehicles road maps and train tracks. A large blackboard outside with coloured chalk facilitated children's mark making. Children's own effort at painting and colouring was encouraged and praised by staff.
- Construction area offered a variety of opportunities for the children to improve their gross and fine motor skills and the large blocks, and the wooden dividers gave the children an opportunity to use opened play resources therefore encouraging them to use their imagination. Tabletop activities for the development of fine motor skills including pin boards, puzzles and jigsaws. The play equipment in the playroom was stored on low-level shelving and or on the ground and was thereby readily accessible to the pre-school children.

- Wall displays in the room include a photo board of children doing a variety of activities in the service and a display area for the children's current artwork.
- All the play educational resources were accessible to the children at their height. Appropriate size tables and chairs or locations near interest areas to provide children with a choice of tabletop activities or floor play.
- The children secure all weather outdoors area had a rich variety of materials including Sand pit with covering, child sized tables and chairs, sensory table with water and lots of different materials for the children to play with. Large doll house with child size wooden kitchen, large wall with chalk for the children to write and draw, mud kitchen, chalkboard, with shock absorbing colourful material on the ground. All resources were accessible, well maintained, and suitable for the ages and stages of the children attending. The layout supported independence, exploration, and child-led play within a single-room structure.