

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024MO001		
Name of Service:	Making Memories Pre-School		
Address of Service:	West Car Park, Knock, Co. Mayo		
Eircode:	F12 NY07		
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Carty		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	15/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM -
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 Knock, 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 in a dedicated section of a day care centre that has been converted for use as a childcare service. There is one playroom and an art room known as the “conservatory”. The service has access to a kitchen and there is sanitary accommodation provided for the children and staff. The children have access to a large, enclosed grass outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff working in the service including the registered provider who also works between the service and a sister service in a nearby town. One of the staff is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. A student was on educational placement in the service at the time of the inspection.

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. 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, 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,*
- (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*

(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

- (1)
- (a) There was a named designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in the service.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises during the inspection. A review of a sample of staff attendance records found that the designated person in charge or deputy were in the service during service opening hours.
- (2) It was confirmed with the registered provider who was present during the inspection that there were four staff including the registered provider who provides relief cover in the service. An adult student on educational placement was also in the service at the time of the inspection. The following vetting information was available for the five adults:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers for three adults including a reference from their most recent employer. One written validated reference from a past employer for two adults.
 - (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer for two adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures for five adults.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of the State for more than six months consecutively as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or equivalent were available on file for the four staff that worked directly with the 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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. There were 3 adults working directly with 16 children on the inspector's announced arrival to the service on the morning of the inspection. One adult student was also on educational placement in the service during the session.
- (3) The minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 3 adults working directly with 16 children during the inspection.

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

The staff had developed a daily plan of activities for the children that was adaptable depending on the children's needs incorporating for example free play, circle time, snack time and outdoor play daily. Children had access to a range of developmentally appropriate play equipment both indoors and outdoors and were free to choose the items they wanted to play with. The play equipment in the playroom was organised in well equipped, defined areas of interest such as a rest/book area and home area. There was a large array of tabletop activities including some Montessori equipment that the staff told the inspector was used depending on children's interests. Toys were positioned at a low level so children could see them.

During the inspection children were observed to play in the dressing up area with outfits hanging up for children to choose from, and a mirror for the children to look at themselves in when they were dressed up. Children played in the home and shop area that had wooden units and numerous accessories including a toy birthday cake and pizza that the children used to make a “feast”. Other children sitting together in a group at a table enjoyed making pictures with stampers in particular choosing stampers that had the first letter of their name. The rest area with cushions, soft seating and toy animals was used at times by children when they wanted to rest. Mock red bricks were lined up by children on the floor in a row with a staff member kneeling down beside them and involved in the play. The second room that the children had access to known as the “conservatory” was not used by the children during the inspection.

The large enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the building provided a range of opportunities for the children to play with. The low-level balance toy systems outdoors were used by the children to walk on and develop their balancing skills. A table with tray had been set up by staff in one area with small planting pots that the children filled with compost. Staff and children played games together such as a running game “*What time is it Mr. Wolf*” that promoted physical activity and supported the children in learning to count. A covered sandbox and mud kitchen provided further opportunity for messy play outdoors.

The staff prompted and supervised the children to clean and dry their hands thoroughly at key times such as before snack time. There was age-appropriate signage in place to show the children how to clean their hands properly. Following hand washing the children sat at tables in groups to eat their food provided from home and stored in a refrigerator on arrival to the service. The staff chatted with the children during their meal and encouraged socialisation. The children were supported to use the toilet when they needed to with help given if required. Staff supervised the children by sight when leaving the playroom to use the toilet.

The children were prepared for transitions from one activity to the next by the staff for example when snack time was approaching. During the inspection, one of the children proudly showed the inspector the primary school photographic display that had been created by the staff to support the older children’s transition from the service to the nearby primary school. The display included photographs of the school, outdoor play area and classroom to develop familiarity for the children with the school. Samples of school uniform clothing were available beside the display for children to look at. The service was planning a joint picnic in the coming weeks with the primary school to support the transition process. Information sheets on school readiness were available in the lobby for parents to take to read if they wished to.

The staff carried out periodic observations of the children to record their progress and planned to provide this information to their parents. When collecting the children, staff greeted parents warmly and chatted with the parents giving them information as necessary. An electronic communication application was used to provide information to parents. There was a family wall in the rest area that had been made with children's family photographs to help link home to the service for the children.

The staff used positive methods of behaviour management to manage the children's behaviour. The staff supervised the children closely and were involved in children's play activities following their leads. At circle time a staff member read a book about a sad squirrel which opened an opportunity for the staff and children to talk about the importance of being kind to each other. Coloured sand timers were used in the service to help children with the concept of passing time and support learning how to share.