

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024MO002
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Name of Service:	Small World Childcare
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Address of Service:	St. Brendan's National School, Moyna, Kilmeena, Westport, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F28 R598
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ellen Moore
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	7
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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

Small World Childcare provides parttime and sessional services to children aged between two and six years of age. The service is registered to operate between 08:30-13:30 hours and provides sessional services from 9:00-12:00 hours. The service is located in a large, dedicated room in a primary school in Myna, Kilmeena in Co Mayo. Sanitary facilities are located off the playroom and children have access to an outdoor play area accessible from the playroom.

Staffing

There are three staff members employed in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children and relief staff.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11 and 19. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.*

(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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and there is a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy were present during the inspection. A sample of attendance records reviewed showed that either the designated person in charge or deputy were recorded as present in the service during opening hours.

(2)

There were three staff members including relief staff employed in the service. The following vetting documents were available for the three staff members:

- (a) Two written, validated references from past employers including their most recent employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for the two staff members who had lived outside of the State for more than six months as adults.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification or equivalent in Early Childhood Care and Education was available for the three staff members who worked directly with the children in the service.

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.

(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 were two staff working with fifteen children on the inspector's announced arrival to the service. Two staff members cared directly for seven children attending parttime services on the afternoon of the inspection.
- (2) The minimum required adult to child ratios of one adult for each eight children aged between three and six years of age were maintained during the provision of the part-time service.
- (3) During the sessional service in the morning, the minimum required ratio of adults to children were adhered to in the service as two adults cared for fifteen children.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a)

There was one staff member present in the service between 8:30-9:00 hours caring for up to seven children attending parttime services. Two adults are required to be on the premises at all times when parttime services are in progress.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

(8)(a)

Corrective and Preventive Action

The rotas were automatically changed to ensure that there are two staff present at all times for part-time care even when numbers are below the 1:8 ratio. This will never happen again now that the registered provider is aware. The registered provider will ensure there are two members of staff with the children at all times during parttime care service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of revised rotas and attendance records post inspection.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation has been satisfactorily addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider. This will be reviewed on next 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

(1)(a)

The staff arranged activities in the service to suit children's needs. There was a daily routine chart on one of the playroom walls and during circle time one of the children was identified as the "weekly helper". One of the roles of the "weekly helper" was to move an arrow along the daily routine chart as the children moved between activities such as greeting, free play, circle time and outdoor play. The routine was flexible to change depending on children's needs and interests according to staff. On the inspector's arrival to the service, the children were enjoying free play in the playroom that was laid out in well resourced, designated interest areas. Groups of children were playing in one area of the playroom where wooden structures had been used to create three "real world" play areas for imaginative play. One of the areas had been used to create a home space with dolls, soft seating and kitchen toys, a second space was used to create a café and the third space was a post office. During the inspection children made cards for "posting" in the post office with stampers and paper provided.

The staff told the inspector that a visit from a postman was planned nearer to Christmas following on in the post office theme. Children made imaginary meals with the plastic food items in the café and kitchen and gave them to their friends and staff.

There was a wide range of play equipment and materials to support the children's learning and development both indoors and outdoors including messy play, art and craft materials and tabletop activities. Physical activity and gross motor development was supported by the ride on toys and a balance beam system that the children played on supervised closely by the staff. Some of the children were able to balance and walk on the balance system by themselves. The staff helped children who needed additional support by holding their hands to help them to balance on the equipment. Outdoor play was part of the children's daily routine, and the children spent a substantial time playing outdoors during the inspection. The children spent a large amount of time playing in the covered sand area and with water play equipment working together in groups pouring water into containers.

The staff placed a strong emphasis on promoting children's independence. For example, all children were supported to put on their own wellington boots and outdoor rain gear as much as possible when going outside without being hurried or rushed by staff. Each child had a separate identifiable cubby hole in the hallway to store their belongings. There was a photograph of each child at their coat hooks to allow them to identify their own storage area. The children were supported to use the toilet by themselves, but the staff were close by if any help was needed. The staff prompted the children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

The service had a rolling lunch system in place which had been communicated to parents and was included in the service's healthy eating policy. The rolling lunch system allowed the children to choose a time to eat when they felt hungry. Food for the children's snacks and meals such as chopped fruit, yoghurts, cheese, ham, crackers and vegetables was provided from home and stored in a refrigerator in the playroom. The inspector observed children go to the refrigerator to retrieve their snacks when they wanted to and eat in groups at tables following washing their hands. Staff supervised the children closely when eating. Discussion with the staff found that they would prompt and remind children to eat if they had not eaten by a certain time.

A rest area with soft seating was provided for the children next to the reading area and was used by children when sitting looking at age-appropriate books. Stackable beds were available for the children to rest/sleep on if they felt tired but were not observed to be used during the inspection.

The children's behaviour was positively managed in a consistent manner by the staff who encouraged the children to take turns such as with play equipment. The staff let the children know when transitions between activities were approaching to prepare them, for example getting ready to transition from free play activities to the structured circle time. The staff played music, and the children were encouraged to help tidy up the toys that they had played with and replace them in low storage systems before joining as a group in a circle in the room. The preparation of the children by the staff helped make the transitions smooth. The staff praised the children appropriately for positive behaviour for example when tidying up between activities. Staff encouraged the children to take part in conversations at circle time which included discussions on the children's Halloween break including "trick or treating". The staff showed the inspector how they used electronic applications to support communication with parents.

The staff and children had recently celebrated Halloween by dressing up in fancy dress outfits and having a disco with photographs of these celebrations available for inspection. The staff informed the inspector that there were strong links developed with the school and the children had visited the school children's classrooms as part of the Halloween celebration.