

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DL001
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Name of Service:	Emma's Childminding Service
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Address of Service:	Clonbeg, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 CK64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emma McLaughlin
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23 February 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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).

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Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

This early years' service is a registered childminding service in operation since 2022. The service caters for children aged 0 - 6 years and operates Monday- Friday from 8.00am-6.00pm. The service is operated from the registered provider's home which consists of a detached two-story dwelling in the rural townland of Clonbeg a short distance from Buncrana, Co. Donegal. Children have access to a dedicated playroom, sanitary facilities and sleep facilities on the ground floor and a dedicated outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the childminder and there is a named adult on the premises to provide assistance in the day to day operation of the service and in event of an emergency.

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 12, 19 and 23.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider following the inspection in relation to unsecured looped window blind cords found in the service which posed a safety risk to children. The registered provider responded promptly to the notice, outlining the measures taken to address the risk.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

Compliance Information

The files for the registered provider were reviewed on the services most recent inspection and deemed to have met the regulatory requirement. Files for an additional person who was on the premises were reviewed as this person provided assistance to the registered provider on the day-to-day operation of the service. The following information was available for review:

- 2 (a) (b) Two written references from previous employers and in particular the most recent past employer.
- (c) A vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of an Garda Síochána.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(8) (b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(8) (b) A second person familiar to the operation of the service was on the premises during the inspection and it was confirmed by the registered provider that this person is on the premises during the hours of operation to assist in the event of an emergency.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 12 - Childminders

(1) A childminder shall ensure that-

- (a) there are no more than 5 pre-school children in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children,*
- (b) subject to paragraph (2), there are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children, and*
- (c) there is a working telephone on the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There were four children present when the inspector arrived at the service.
- (b) The requirement to have no more than two children aged under the age of 15 months present at any one time was adhered to on the day of inspection.
- (c) There was a working telephone on the premises on the day of inspection.

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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 basic care needs of the children were observed to be met on the day of inspection through the practices and routines of the childminder. All food and drinks consumed by the children were provided by the service and served at regular intervals throughout the day. The food provided on the day was observed to be balanced and nutritious with children given the opportunity to feed themselves. The mealtime was a relaxed, social occasion and children sat together at low level tables or highchairs and the childminder provided support to children if required. Milk was provided with the main meal and children's individual drinking bottles of water were available at all times in the room. Children's toileting needs were accommodated in line with their individual needs. Regular nappy changes were carried out throughout the day. The process was observed to be carried out in a gentle and dignified manner with positive interactions between the childminder and the child. Children's clothes were changed when required and all-weather outdoor clothing was available for each child when engaging in outdoor play.

Children's need for sleep and rest were met in line with their individual needs and routines. This was evidenced on the day by children being placed to sleep when displaying signs of tiredness. There was a designated room used for sleep which was away from the general play area and provided a quiet restful environment conducive to sleep. A large, comfortable couch in the playroom provided a space for children to relax or for the childminder to provide comfort to children when required. This was used on the day for the group to sit on and read books together. Children were observed to be able to move about freely in the playroom and were brought outdoors to play for a period of time in the morning. The childminder informed the inspector that the children have an opportunity to play outdoors at least once every day. The childminder showed a consistent and positive approach in her management of children's behaviour. Minor behaviour incidents were dealt with promptly and positive behaviour was actively praised and encouraged.

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The childminder was observed to be warm, caring and responsive in her interactions with children. Soft, gentle tones were used when interacting with children on a one-to-one basis and a light, playful demeanour was exhibited when engaging with the group. It was evident from the behaviour of the children that close relationships had been secured between the childminder and the children. The children were observed to seek out the childminder for comfort and reassurance when upset and actively encouraged the childminders participation in their play. Children also appeared to have formed secure relationships with one another. There was an atmosphere of friendship and working together throughout the day and children were regularly observed playing together, modelling each other's behaviours and engaging in playful interactions.

There was one room designated for use by the children which was set out as an attractive play space for with several areas of interest. The resources supported different types of play and created opportunities for children to practice different skills. The home area, baby care items, playhouse and range of small world toys encouraged role and pretend play. Connecting and stackable blocks, construction table and manipulative toys encouraged construction and early mathematics. Arts and crafts materials encouraged creativity and pre-writing skills and the walls were decorated with art pieces created by the children. There was a range of sound making toys to encourage music and rhythm. Jigsaws, games and construction resources supported thinking and reasoning skills. A large floor mat provided a comfortable space for floor play particularly with younger children and a child height table and chairs provided a space for older children to engage in focused tabletop activities.

There was a garden to the rear of the premises which provided an outdoor play area for the children. The area was resourced with outdoor play equipment and toys to support different types of play and there was adequate space for children to engage in active physical play. The play equipment included ride on toys such as a scooter and bike, two swing sets one with a climb and slide unit, a water table and a mud kitchen. The children played in a large gazebo area when it was raining which provided adequate shelter. The water table and mud kitchen appeared to be a particular area of interest for children on the day of inspection with the group spending considerable time filling and pouring from the various pieces of supporting equipment that was provided.

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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:

The front entrance was secured on the inspector's arrival and remained secure throughout the inspection preventing unauthorised access or the risk of a child exiting the building unsupervised. The play equipment and materials within the playroom were age appropriate and maintained in good condition with no evidence of hazards. Cables and flexes were in good condition and out of children's reach. Cleaning materials and hazardous items were stored in an area inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for children's use in the sanitary accommodation. Waste was disposed of in foot pedal operated bins. The environment indoors was observed to be maintained in a clean hygienic condition and cleaning records were maintained by the childminder detailing daily and weekly cleaning tasks. Ventilation was provided in all rooms by way of openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

No medications were administered to children on the day of inspection and the childminder confirmed that no children currently attending the service required medication. The childminder was conversant when asked about the steps to be taken in the event that a child requires medication as per their administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

Adequate and suitable facilities were provided for children aged under two years. Two standard cots were available in the designated sleep room. Each cot was fitted with a safety mattresses and the cots were positioned at least 50cm apart. The childminder was observed carrying out physical checks on sleeping children at no more than 10 minute intervals with a record maintained of the colour, breathing pattern and position of each child.

Fire Safety:

There were documented records of fire drills having taken place monthly and exit routes were free from obstruction ensuring the safe evacuation from the premises in the event of an emergency.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

There were four unsecured looped window blind cords in the playroom and one in the sleep room. Window blind cords pose a safety risk to children. An immediate action notice was issued to the register provider following the inspection and a response confirming that expeditious corrective action had been taken to address the risk was submitted in return.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

All bind cords were secured with safety clips and will be checked once a week to ensure they are in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Images of secured blind cords submitted.

Summary Comment

The response submitted by the registered provider has been accepted and the requirements of this regulation have been met.