

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO112
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Name of Service:	Sticky Fingers
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Address of Service:	Woods, Midfield, Swinford, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F12 E243
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Mcloughlin
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	09/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	2	PM	3
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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

Sticky Fingers is a registered childminding service in the townland of Midfield, near Swinford in Co Mayo. The service operates from the registered childminder's home that is a detached bungalow. The service is registered to cater for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age from 7:00 to 18:30 hours. The children have access under supervision to the kitchen/ living room area, sitting room, a sleep room and sanitary area. A large well developed, enclosed outdoor play area for the children is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered childminder works in the service daily. There is an emergency support person available to provide support in case of 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 unannounced 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.

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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

(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.

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Compliance Information

(2) (a),(b),(c),(d)

The childminder advised the inspector that there were no new adults in the service since the last inspection of the 11 October 2021. The vetting files for two adults in the service had been reviewed on previous inspection and been found to be compliant with the regulatory requirements.

(4) The childminder held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(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

(1)

(a) The childminder worked directly with two children in the morning and three children on the afternoon of the inspection.

(8) (b) The emergency person was available nearby to the childminder and was present in the service for a short time in the afternoon towards the close of the inspection.

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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 two children present in the service on the morning of the inspection and three children present in the afternoon. Records were available to show that there were no more than five preschool children attending the service at any time.
 - (b) One child aged under 15 months was present in the service on the day. Only one child aged under 15 months was enrolled in the service.
 - (c) There was a working telephone provided in the service.

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)
- Appropriate activities were arranged by the childminder throughout the day to meet the various children's needs incorporating the collection of children from a nearby sessional service. The children ate at regular intervals including a mid-morning snack of fruit and a lunch of cheese on toast, yoghurt and chopped apple. Meals were eaten by children seated at the island/table in the kitchen area with a highchair for younger children positioned nearby allowing younger children feel included in mealtime conversations.

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Age-appropriate cutlery and plates were used for children to eat with at mealtimes. The childminder supervised the children closely at mealtimes, helping younger children as needed whilst talking with them.

The childminder put bibs on younger children to protect their clothes when eating. The children's faces were cleaned by the childminder after eating and she supported them to wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap when needed. The children's nappies were changed by the childminder in a timely, sensitive manner, who chatted to them during the process.

The children's individual needs for sleep and rest were accommodated. One child showed signs of tiredness by rubbing their eyes and was placed down to sleep by the childminder in a cot in the sleep room. There was a video monitor connected to a large screen in the kitchen/living room allowing the childminder to view children in the sleep room to compliment the 10-minute sleep observations made by the childminder. When it became apparent the child did not settle to sleep after a period of time, the childminder brought the child back to the living room.

Older children were observed to relax on soft seating in the sitting room when they felt tired.

Interactions between the childminder and the children were observed to be warm and friendly with the childminder showing familiarity with the children's individual likes and interests.

The children had access to a variety of toys and play equipment in open shelving in the living area and were observed to choose toys to play with during the inspection. The childminder had large supplies of additional toys and play equipment in cupboards that were rotated for use. Messy play was facilitated in the service for example at the outdoor covered sandbox and through water play activities. Each child had protective outdoor clothing to wear when engaging in messy play. Art and craft supplies were kept in a cupboard in the living room and used for activities with the children on a regular basis. The outdoor area was well developed and used daily. The area had areas of tarmac and grass with fixed play equipment including a large wooden climbing system to encourage physical activity. Wooden seating and ride on toys were stored in a large metal shed to protect them.

The childminder informed the inspector that she used an electronic communication system to supplement verbal handovers of information to parents on collection. The inspector was shown examples of how the system was used as a two-way communication system with parents. The childminder used the system to provide information on the children's day in the service including what they had eaten, how they had slept/rested and toileting/nappy changing information. The system also facilitated the childminder to attach photographs of the children engaging in activities in the service for their parents to view. There was a daily routine plan for activities on display in the rear hallway in the service.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The childminder had a weekly menu displayed in a hallway and on a whiteboard in the kitchen area providing parents with information of food plans for their children. Main meals were varied for example a roast beef, vegetable and potato dinner had been prepared for the children the previous day and a “chippy dinner” of chips, chicken goujons, sweetcorn, broccoli and peas was planned to be served at 4.30pm on the day of inspection. The children were provided with choices for example beans on toast were planned to be served as part of lunch but was changed to cheese on toast on request by the children. Water was given to the children in individual beakers/cups to drink at mealtimes and was freely available to them if they wanted a drink during the day.

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 main entrance door to the service was secured on the inspector’s unannounced arrival and remained secured during the inspection allowing the childminder to control access to the service. The gates to the enclosed outdoor play area had securing devices in place to prevent children from leaving the area unauthorised. The low-level windows in the sitting room and kitchen/dining room had securing mechanisms to prevent children leaving the rooms. Blind cords in place on windows were secured with securing mechanism. Fire guards were secured in place at hearths in the sitting room and living room areas. Cleaning products were kept in locked cupboards to prevent access by the children. Two dogs were secured in a large shed before the children arrived at the service. The toys and play equipment used by the children during the inspection were in good condition and suitable for their age and developmental stages. Waste bins were stored away from the outdoor play area and the oil tank was fenced off and inaccessible to the children.

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Infection Control:

Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were used to wash and dry children's hands and foot pedal bins were provided to dispose of wastepaper towels. A foot pedal operated bin was used to dispose of nappies. The childminder was observed to clean down the nappy changing mat following use. Cleaning schedules were in place and the childminder kept electronic records of cleaning/disinfecting processes in the service. The refrigerator in the kitchen was used to store perishable food items below the required temperature of 5 °C.

Administration of Medication:

No child needed to have medication administered to them by the childminder during the inspection. Temperature reducing medicines were available should they be required and stored out of reach of the children. The childminder recorded medication given to children in the service on an electronic system accessible by parents and sent a text message alert to parents to highlight administration.

Safe Sleep:

Records showed that the childminder carried out observations of sleeping children at ten-minute intervals keeping note of their colour, breathing pattern, position. The sleep room air temperature was recorded at 16.1°C before a child was placed in a cot to sleep. A standard cot with safety mattress and waterproof covering was used for sleep for children aged under two years.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes in the service were observed to be unobstructed on the day of unannounced inspection.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*
- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
 - (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The childminder had undertaken a First Aid Response (FAR) training course with a certificate available in the service valid until the 14 May 2025.
- (2)
- (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location in the kitchen area.
 - (b) The first aid equipment was easily accessible to the childminder if children needed first aid treatment.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Certification of insurance with an expiry date of the 31 December 2023 was available in the service for a maximum of 5 preschool children at any one time. The childminder had separate insurance for transporting children by car valid until the 18 December 2023.