

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

Tusla I.D:	TU2015GY014							
Name of Service	Apple Drops							
Address of Service:	Ballabaun, Loughrea, Co. Galway.							
Email Address:	ashmccaughey@eircom.net							
Name of Registered Provider:	Aisling Murray							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care		Part-Time		Sessional			
	Drop-In		Childminding	✓	Temporary			
Proposed change:	1. Change in weeks of operation from 38 to 42 weeks. 2. Change in operating hours from 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs and from 12.45hrs to 15.45hrs, to 8.30hrs to 17.30hrs. 3. Change in age profile of children from 3 to 6 years to 2 to 6 years.							
Proposed Number of Children:	5 (no change)							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	Approve all changes							
Registered change:	Change in age profile from 3 – 6 years to 2 – 6 years							
Date of Inspection:	2	7	0	2	2	0	2	4
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Heagney							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.							

Rationale for Inspection: Change in weeks of operation, change in hours, and age profile.

Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Childminder for 5 Children
Date of Registration	7 th March 2024

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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	This childminding service is in the townland of Ballabaun, near the town of Loughrea, Co. Galway. The service operates from a detached premises, the registered childminders home. This childminding service proposes to operate a full day care service from 8.30hrs to 17.30hrs, from Monday to Friday for children aged between 2 years and 6 months to 6 years for 42 weeks of the year.
Premises	The children will have access under supervision to a designated playroom, the kitchen / dining / sitting area, and a sanitary area. Quiet rest areas will be available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There are outdoor play areas to the side, front, and rear of the premises for children's outdoor play, fresh air, and exploration.
Staffing	The registered childminder works in the service daily. There are two emergency support persons who will be capable of knowing what to do without instruction and provide additional support in case of emergency. The registered childminder holds a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The registered childminder has documentary evidence of on-going training and education and has experience in working in childcare for several years.
Methodology	The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Safety and Premises. The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.

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Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered childminder who was present on the day of the inspection.
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Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment	
<i>(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—</i> <i>(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.</i>	
Requirement met:	(1)(a) The requirement was met. The registered childminder will be working in the service daily. There will be two emergency support persons who will be capable of knowing what to do without instruction and provide additional support in case of emergency.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels	
<i>(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.</i> <i>(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—</i> <i>(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.</i>	
Requirement met:	(1) The registered childminder will be working in the service daily and directly caring, for children aged between 2 years and 6 months to 6 years of age. (8)(b) The registered childminder will ensure that there would always be a second adult on the premises or close by, who could be called upon if required in an emergency. There were two emergency support persons available.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 12 – Childminders	
<i>(1) A childminder shall ensure that-</i> <i>(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,</i> <i>(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</i> <i>(c) there is a working telephone on the premises.</i>	

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Requirement met:	(1)(a) The registered childminder is proposing that there will be no more than five pre-school children, in her care at any one time. (b) It is proposed that all children will be aged between 2 years and 6 months to 6 years of age. (c) The registered childminder had a charged mobile phone with good coverage.
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that— (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night. (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that— (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.	
Requirement met:	The requirement was met. (1)(a) The design, organisation, and resourcing of pre-school room and the outdoor environment would be able to support each child's wellbeing, learning, and development. The indoor pre-school room was designed and arranged to : – maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter, – divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support proposed children's play, development, and learning, – give all proposed children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development. • The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was thereby readily accessible to the proposed pre-school children. • The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, and designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.

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- Play materials and equipment were developmentally appropriate. There were role play areas including a tent, a tunnel, a shop with container packages, a shopping trolley, a phone, and a shop register and a kitchen with an iron, vacuum cleaner, bowls, a kettle, cups, containers, utensil, and food items. There were prams, dolls, dolls clothing and dress up costumes, hats, and helmets. There were problem solving items including blocks, syringes, weighing scales, strings, bolts, test tubes, dippers, balls, potato heads, small world items and latch boards. There were pegs, links, counters, timers, pins, numbers, letters, magnets, stacking, hammering materials, insets, connectors, beads, laces, puzzles, jigsaws, and games. There was a dolls house with small world furniture. There were books, a globe, mix and match items, cards, dressing frames, eraser boards, and blackboards. There was a horse's head, animals, dinosaurs, action men, tracks, a driver's wheel, helicopters, trucks, cars, a hospital, and a fire station. There were art and craft materials including rubber bands, glue, stickers, grains, sandpaper, containers, paints, pencils, crayons, trays, paper rolls, and paper.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, stickers, posters, artwork, and educational materials including Spring, sharing is caring, happy news, my name is, today is, numbers, animals, seasons, birthdays, and my family. There was a white board, noticeboard areas, and a painted mural tree. There were also displays of inspirational thoughts and some service policies. There were photographs of the children engaged in activities.

(1)(b) A rest / quiet area was provided in the playroom in the form of a soft matting and there was a couch in the sitting room to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.

There was a sleep mat available for any child attending the full day care / part time service requiring sleep provision.

(3)(a) The outdoor environment was laid out to accommodate the learning and developmental needs of the children. The outdoor play areas were to the front, side and rear of the premises and covered by grass, tarmacadam, paving bricks, bark, pebbles, matting, and artificial grass.

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In the upper area in the rear of the premises

There was a canopy under a tree that the children called the 'den', with blocks, crates, rocks, tractors, water guns and flags. There was a goal post, balls, bicycles, a target post, push cars, swings, slides, trailers, motorcycles, rollers, tractors, rockers, and a climbing frame. There was an inset trampoline, activity tables, tyres, and bird feeders. There were hula hoops, a sand unit, brushes, shovels, and utensils.

There was an all-weather sheltered area with a kitchen which had fairy lights, pots, pans, a bell, trays, dish racks, jugs, kettles, buckets, a cooking area, seating, and a sink with pebbles. There were fairy doors, helmets, a latch board, blackboards, a mirror, hooks, and easels. There were cones, a driver's wheel, and wooden trunks. There was a tree house with canopy netting, steps, a slide, and a vantage area. There was a wooden tepee, wooden planks, tracks, stations, toys, and games.

There was a greenhouse with strawberries, onions, garlic, lemon balm, carrots, beans, potatoes, mint, and tomato plants. There was hedging, apple and plum trees. There were various trees, shrubs, plants, and planters.

The registered childminder advised that the children, would pre-dominantly play on the brick paving and tarmacadam areas lower area while ongoing renovations would take place in the upper area.

The registered childminder advised that the children would have the opportunity to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions.

Additional outdoor play equipment was stored in garage storage shed areas.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement was met.

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	• There was a healthy eating policy. The registered childminder advised that healthy eating would be promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines. • The registered childminder advised that the service would offer the following to all children attending part time and full day care. – From 8:30hrs to 9:30hrs, it is proposed a selection of cereals, toast and milk will be offered. – From 11:45hrs, it is proposed that the registered childminder will provide a child's morning snack time consisting of a selection of sandwiches, rice cakes, yogurts, cheese, fruit pieces, and bread sticks. – From 14:00hrs, the child's main meal which will be supplied by the child's parents and guardians will be served. – From 15:30hrs, it is proposed that the registered childminder will provide a child's evening snack time consisting of a selection of sandwiches, rice cakes, yogurts, cheese, fruit pieces, and bread sticks. • The registered childminder advised that the children attending the service on a full day care basis will have two meals, and one snack, supplied by the service and each meal will have at least two food groups. • The registered childminder advised that the hot meals will be stored and reheated, on site in the childminder's designated kitchen. • Drinks of milk and water will be offered for each child's meal and snack time. • The registered childminder that a drinks table will be available in the playroom, to allow the proposed children the opportunity to 'self-serve' their drinks. • Perishable items from children's lunch boxes will be stored in designated fridge in the registered childminder's kitchen.
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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement was met.

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General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Blinds had fastener devices as a safety measure, preventing any potential hazard access.
- The oil heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- The water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 27°C, on the day of inspection.
- Documented risk assessments and health and safety records for the playroom and outdoor play areas were available for review.

Infection Control

- Liquid soap and paper hand towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary area.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Cleaning requirements and cleaning record documentation were available for the inspection. There were suitable cleaning products available in the service.
- The registered childminder advised that the outdoor play equipment was cleaned prior to/ after a child's use, with evidence of documented records.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playroom.
- There were foot pedaled lidded bins in the sanitary area and playroom.

Safe Sleep

- The playroom had a quiet rest area with child size bean bag and soft matting to provide an opportunity for a child to rest and relax or opt out of an activity if he/she wishes to do so.

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- Children also had access to the couch in the registered childminders sitting room.
- There was a sleep mat with linen available for any child attending the full day care / part time service requiring sleep provision.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) The registered childminder had a current paediatric first aid qualification.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position in playroom.
- (b) A first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of—
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1)(a) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance record of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated May 2023. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance certificate for the smoke and fire detection system was dated 21st of September 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

The service had insurance with an expiry date 9th of February 2025 which was for a childminding service for 6 children with no more than 5 pre-school children and 1 school aged child and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

The registered childminder must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered childminders compliance with Regulation 28.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(a)(b)(c)(d)&(e)

In the playroom

- there were three openable windows and a door.
- the artificial lighting that was fitted with shatter proof covers and there were four integrated spotlights.
- there were two wall mounted oil-fired radiators with a surface temperature of 26.7°C.

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- the oil-fired heating system had a thermostatically controlled thermostat to allow the recommended room temperature of between 18°C and 22°C. On the day of inspection, the indoor room temperature was maintained at 21.9°C.
- Records indicated that the heating system was last serviced on the 8th of December 2023.
- The warm water in the sanitary areas was maintained at a safe temperature of 27°C and the registered childminder advised it would be no greater than 43°C.
- The play and work equipment was clean and in good repair.
- Cleaning equipment was safely stored away from and inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- From observation, the furnished playroom, was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were provided. There was a designated children's toilet with a designated children's wash hand basins. There were two designated adult-only toilets with two designated wash hand basins.
- Liquid soap dispensers and paper hand towels in designated dispensers were within easy access to a pre-school child.
- Foot operated pedalled lidded bins were provided in the sanitary area and playroom.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.
- (3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

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	(1) Adequate floor space was provided in the proposed playroom, for the free movement of children to work, rest, learn, and play. (2) The registered childminder will ensure that the minimum clear floor space is adhered to for pre-school children. (3) The measurement of the playroom, floor space was 32.94 square meters, thereby allowing for the childminding service.
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