

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023FL001
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Name of Service:	The Windy Hill
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Address of Service:	37 Ballygossan Park, Skerries, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K34 F510
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Moriarty
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	14/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle
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

The Windy Hill is a registered childminding service which operates from 09:15am to 12:45pm Monday to Friday catering for 5 children. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for eligible children attending. The service is conducted from the registered providers family home in Skerries, Co Dublin. The service implements a nature based emergent curriculum and a predominantly outdoor education delivery model.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service on a daily basis. An emergency contact person is available in the service.

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 regulations 9, 11, 12 and 19.

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.

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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 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, and*

(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.*

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(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 was the designated person in charge of the service and there was an emergency contact person available if required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) & (b) Two written references were available for the registered provider and one validated written reference was available for the emergency contact person in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and the emergency contact person.

(d) International police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the registered provider whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) A second validated written reference was not available for the emergency contact person in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) & (b) 2nd reference provided for Emergency Person.

Supporting documentation submitted

One validated written reference.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted.

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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.*
- (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, and*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The correct adult to child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There was 1 adult caring for 4 children aged 2 years 11 months to 3 years 6 months.
- (8)(c) A second person familiar with the operation of the service is available if required.

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,*
- (c) there is a working telephone on the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) There were 4 children present when the inspector arrived at the service.
- (c) A working telephone was available in the service.

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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 following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- There was a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the service. On the Early year's inspector arrival the children were engaged in meaningful play-based activities in the outdoor play area. The registered provider joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to the children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play.
- The children bring their own morning snack with them to the service which they enjoyed whilst sitting outside in an area which was covered with a rigid plastic roof. The children were given plenty of time to enjoy their snack with the registered provider sitting chatting to the children thus creating a relaxed and social atmosphere. The children's water bottles were freely available to them to take if thirsty throughout the session.
- The children's independence was supported and encouraged in relation to the children using the toilet with discreet assistance and supervision provided as required. The children were facilitated to wash their hands in between play activities and before eating. A plentiful supply of tissues was available for the children to wipe their noses, all of the children had all weather outdoor wear and wellington boots available to wear outdoors.
- The children's achievements were positively reinforced with recognition, praise and encouragement by the registered provider. The registered provider was observed to approach any minor disagreements that occurred between the children in a positive and calm way and supported the children to resolve any conflict that arose.

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Supporting relationships around children:

- The interactions between the registered provider and the children were observed to be consistently positive and caring, the registered provider-initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal cues and provided regular praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- When children were in disagreement together, they sought the support of the registered provider. This demonstrated that children receive regular support and guidance to problem solve with peers. The registered provider was observed to use questions, prompts, reminders and suggestions to support children in solving their arising problems together. This builds children's capacity to problem solve and resolve challenges independently, positively impacting their welfare and development.
- The registered provider updates parents on their children's progress in the service on a daily basis at drop off and collection time.

Physical and material environment:

- The indoor care area was located between the registered providers kitchen and living room. The indoor environment was well laid out and resourced to provide a range of diverse, creative and enriching experiences for children. The play materials and resources were available on low level shelving to enable the children to chose and return materials as they wanted.
- The care room in the service was spacious and enabled the children to move around the area freely. The room was laid out with areas of interest including home areas with a range of accessorial equipment including tableware, cooking utensils and dress up resources to enable the children to extend their real and imaginary play, a range of table top resources and jigsaws were available in addition to arts and crafts materials.
- The service has a strong emphasis on outdoor play with the children spending the majority of their time in the outdoor area to the rear of the registered provider's home. The outdoor play area provided a wide range of play opportunities for the children. A mud kitchen enhanced the children's imaginary play as it was well equipped with pots, pans, cooking & baking utensils, large bowls for the children to mix mud, water and sand in addition to containers for water. This area was divided from the large sandpit by a raised bed containing a variety of herbs. The sandpit contained a range of trucks and transport toys along with a wide range of digging materials, a section of the area was identified as a construction site and a variety of construction 'hard hats 'traffic cones and wooden blocks provided to extend the children's play.

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A large wall mounted black board supported the children's drawing & writing skills. Planting opportunities were available in a planting area in the centre of the outdoor space where the children planted flower bulbs and in a green house where the children picked tomatoes on the day of inspection. A range of ride on toys along with push along toys were provided for the children to use. An area beneath a rigid plastic roof contained a bench table where the children ate their snack and participated in tabletop activities. A cosy area with 2 chairs and a wide selection of books were available along with construction blocks, a large art easel and a wide variety of arts and crafts resources.