

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DL079

Name of Service: Michelle's Childcare

Address of Service: Tulnaree,
Carndonagh,
Co. Donegal
F93 W599

Email Address: donaghy.michelle@yahoo.com

Name of Registered Service Provider: Ms Michelle Donaghy

Type of service registered: Child-minder ☒

Date of Inspection: 1 5 0 3 2 0 2 1

No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: AM 4 PM 4

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
2nd Floor, St Conal's Campus,
Kilmacrennan Road,
Letterkenny,
Co Donegal.
F92 XK94

Inspection undertaken by: M. Skelly
Title: Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection

Governance	Health, Welfare and Development	Safety
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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



Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
REF: F09: Version 4: 16.10.2020
1.0

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Description of Service	This child-minding service is located on the outskirts of Carndonagh town in North of County Donegal. The service is provided to children aged from birth to six years and operates weekdays from 8am – 6pm. A school age service was not provided at the time of inspection. The service is provided from the child-minder's home which is a detached two story house. A dedicated playroom is provided directly off the main kitchen and the dining room is used as a sleep room during the hours of operation. The children have access to a spacious garden on the premises for outdoor play.
Staffing	The child-minder was present with four pre-school children and one older school age family member on the day.
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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the child-minder and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information:

- (2)
- The child-minder operated single-handedly with just one adult as contact person in the event of an emergency. The vetting details with regards to written references, Garda clearance and police vetting were found to be satisfactory at the services last inspection. No additional information was required regarding these at this inspection.
- (7)
- A copy of the service's policies and procedures were maintained in the home and readily accessible. The requirement of the emergency contact person was to assist under the supervision of the child-minder in the event of an emergency. This adult was informed of the updated procedures with regards to COVID-19.

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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information:	A copy of the service's policies, procedures and statements was maintained in the pre-school facility. A review of the enhanced policies relating to COVID-19 were reviewed for this inspection. The content of these reflected the current national guidance as issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and were therefore deemed to be satisfactory. These included: • Infection control policy with revised cleaning and disinfection procedures, revised training. • Risk management policy. • An incident plan for managing a case of suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus • Information for parents including revised drop off and collection procedures.
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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels

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

Compliance Information:	(8)(b) The child-minder identified a named adult as the person to contact in the event of an emergency. This adult lived in close proximity to the home and was familiar with the child-minding service and willing to assist in the event of an emergency.
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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 12 – Child-minders

(1) A child-minder 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

(2) A child-minder may have more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time where all such children are siblings of each other.

Compliance Information:

(1)(a)

There were four pre-school children present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 9.30am on the day of the inspection. A sample review of attendance records demonstrated that no more than five pre-school children were present in the service at any one time.

(b)

One child aged less than 15months was present in the service during the inspection visit.

(c)

The child-minder had a landline phone in the home and a charged mobile phone to hand on the day.

(2)

This section was not applicable at the time of inspection as siblings both under 15 months of age were not enrolled in the service at the time.

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

Compliance Information:

(1)(a)

The following two parts of this section of the regulation were reviewed. The areas relating to *Basic Care Needs* and the *Programme of Care and its Implementation* were not part of the focus for this particular inspection.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

The child-minding service offered an intimate homely environment for the small group of children attending the service. This helped to foster meaningful relationships between the child-minder, the children and their families. Informal exchanges were carried out at arrival and collection times in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Additional individual contacts were made via phone messages. The interactions by the child-minder with the children who were present, were observed to be sensitive, caring and responsive. Children were spoken to by name, listened to, encouraged and praised. The provision of a planned daily routine and announcing what was to happen next provided children with a predictable pattern to their day. The children present were observed to be relaxed and confident in their surroundings, played happily together and responded with animated enthusiasm in their conversations with the child-minder.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

A bright and light filled dedicated playroom was provided immediately off the kitchen with a streamer curtain used to separate the two areas. This provided good visibility into the room from the kitchen when the child-minder was preparing meals and snacks. The playroom contained a good variety of play equipment and materials to support key areas for children's learning and skill development. A play home corner/shop area contained a cooker unit, village shop frame with a variety of relevant props. The library corner consisted of two large bean bag seats, an extra-large sized teddy bear and basket of picture/story books. Several low level shelving units contained various groups of play items which were at children's height for them to select from. These showcased construction blocks and sets; magnetic discs; peg boards; animal toys; jigsaws; baby dolls with baby care accessories; transport toys; sound making rattles and instruments; a set of skittles; soft fabric toys and hand balls. A wall mounted blackboard was resourced with coloured chalk and in another area, wall mounted manipulate boards were set at low level. On the higher shelf areas, a supply of arts and crafts and Playdough resources were visible. Suitable sized table and chairs were provided for table top activities. Some of the play units were positioned to restrict access of play items with smaller parts by young toddler children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

These play materials helped to encourage the development of children's early numeracy, literacy, mathematical and creative skills and provide materials to support playing with peers as well as solitary play.

The garden provided a spacious outdoor play area for children. Further development had taken place since the service's last inspection which included new play equipment and canvas shelter areas. The large grass section extending along one side of the house contained, wooden slope with tarpaulin cover, a willow tunnel, an impact resistant surface section with swings, slides, climbing frame, rocker boat and tunnel and at one end a fenced-in mud kitchen area. The level cement section running along the rear of the house contained a covered sand box, picnic bench, large wooden sit in bus and a selection of ride on toys.

Opportunities for outdoor play were maximized and all of the children spent almost all of the inspection period playing outdoors. Each child had a supply of all-weather protective clothing and wellingtons to facilitate outdoor play all year round.

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:

Entry into the home was via a secure side garden gate to the rear entrance of the house. During the COVID-19 restrictions, parents did not enter the premises during the hours of operation. The areas occupied by the children were secured in a manner which ensured that a child could not exit undetected or gain access to the other areas of the home. The patio doors leading from the playroom to the outside were locked with a key held on an adjacent high level hook. The outdoor play area was secure with an unlikely risk of children exiting unsupervised.

Potential hazards were appropriately secured. Children did not have access to the utility room, to store cupboards containing cleaning products, to the contents of the garden shed or to the area containing the main waste storage bins. Window blind cords were secured to wall brackets. There were no accessible electric cables. The television screen was securely wall mounted.

The hot water tap at the wash hand basin used by children was thermostatically controlled to prevent a risk of scalding and to facilitate effective hand-washing.

Play equipment and play materials were in good repair and did not pose a risk of injury. The open shelving units accessed by children were all low level with secure, broad bases and did not pose a risk of toppling. High chairs were in good repair and fitted with appropriate safety harnesses.

INFECTION CONTROL:

Enhanced infection control measures around COVID-19 were detailed in the service's revised **policies and procedures** which reflected the current national health guidance. These included the completion of a comprehensive self-assessment checklist prior to and following the re-opening of the service. The practices observed during the inspection reflected these policies and procedures.

There were enhanced **cleaning procedures** in place with appropriate supplies of detergent and disinfectant product, gloves and disposable paper hand towels. Cleaning equipment included floor mops, a dishwasher, a steam sterilizer, and washing machine. Toys mouthed by children were removed until cleaned and disinfected. It was noted that toys, equipment and all areas in use were kept in immaculate condition.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

Suitable **hand washing** facilities were provided with liquid soap, disposable paper towels, warm water and lidded waste bins at children's toilet area and in the kitchen. Hand sanitising gel used by the child-minder was maintained on a high shelf in the nappy change area. Good hand hygiene routines were observed. Children appeared familiar with the revised hand hygiene routine and automatically went to wash their hands on arrival, after toileting and before snack time. The child-minder was observed to regularly wash or sanitise her hands.

Hygienic **Nappy changes** were carried out in line with current national guidance. The child-minder washed her hands before and after the procedure, donned gloves and disposable apron, put soiled nappies in a sealed bin and cleaned the nappy change area after use.

The **incident plan** included procedures in the event a child or adult presenting with symptoms associated with COVID-19 while in the service. A suitable supply of personal protective equipment was readily available.

SAFE SLEEP:

Safe sleep practices in line with national guidance were implemented. Children under two years were placed to sleep on their backs in a standard cot. Cotton bed sheets and a cellular cotton blanket or sleep suit was provided. Direct sleep checks on sleeping children were carried out at ten minute intervals and documented. A system to monitor the sleep room temperature was in place to ensure it remained within the safe range of 16° - 20°centigrade. On one occasion, the provider noted that the sleep room temperature had risen between checks and took remedial action by opening the window.