

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015KY079 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Martinas Childcare Centre |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|

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|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of Service:</b> | St Finans Bay, The Glen, Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|

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| <b>Eircode:</b> | V23 XV57 |
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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Martina Tarrant |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|

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| <b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b> | 02/06/2026 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 27 | PM | 24 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds,<br>Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | M O' Reilly                                                                                                     |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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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### Description of service

Martina's Childcare is a privately owned service which is registered to offer a full day, part time and sessional early years care and education for children aged 0 to 6 years. Hours of operation are registered as 08:00 to 18:00 hours. The registered provider stated that the service currently accommodates children from aged 2 years and operates from 08:15 to 15:15 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a rural coastal village of St Finans Bay, Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry. The service operates from a converted section of the registered providers private residence and a portacabin to the rear side of the premise. There are two playrooms with a canopied outdoor room. There is a spacious outdoor play area located beside the service.

### Staffing

There are 5 adults attached to the service including the registered provider who is service based. Each of the adults that work directly with the children has a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

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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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider/person in charge, 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

*(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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider/ named person in charge was present for the inspection.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present at time of inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service.

(2) The recruitment records in relation to 5 adults attached to the service were the subject of the inspection.

- (a) Of the required 10 references, 5 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 10 required references, 5 were from sources other than previous employers, with required records of validation on file.

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(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 5 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as no adult had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as adults.

(4)  
There was evidence that the 5 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
On day of inspection, an adequate number of adults were observed to work directly with the children in attendance.

(2)  
Morning

(2) The required adult to child ratios were adhered to across the play areas  
During the morning there were 27 children, aged 2 to 5 years in attendance, with 4 adults available to these children.

In the afternoon of the day of inspection, 4 adults, were working directly with the 24 children present, who were aged 2 to 5 years.

In addition, the registered/ person in charge was observed to provide staff cover as needed. The registered provider was available to facilitate the inspection process.

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### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following records in writing were reviewed on inspection:

- (h) The attendance of each child on a daily basis was recorded that indicated the arrival and departure time to the service each day.
- (k) The service had a duplicate book for the recording of accident and incidents in the service. The record contained all the required information and parents sign the book when collecting their child from the service. There were no entries in the accident and incident book since the previous inspection in 2023.

### 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

- The food provided by the parents was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The lunches consisted of sandwiches, yoghurts, cheese and a mixture of suitably sized sliced and chopped fruits.
- The children had individual water bottles which were also available to them throughout the day.
- Age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery were used with the younger children having access to bowls and spoons while the older children had access to plates and cutlery.
- During snack times, the adults remained with the children and assisted as required. The children were given adequate time to enjoy their food, and the staff were observed chatting with the children during snack and mealtimes.

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- The adults interacted with the children in a warm and caring manner. For example, calm tones of voice were used, and children were patiently guided during activities and routine tasks.
- Staff were heard by the inspector praising and encouraging children during play in both rooms where children were colouring, completed puzzles, arts and crafts and playing with animals. Staff were noted by the inspector to sit at the children's level.
- Children using the sanitary facilities were observed to do so independently with the supervision of staff.
- Staff were noted by the inspector to sit at the children's level.
- The spacious layout of the service supported the children to move freely within the environment and to actively engage in their chosen tasks.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The service operated 3 care rooms, namely Naíonra 1 and Naíonra 2 and the canopied, outdoor playroom. Since the last inspection, the registered provider has covered the outdoor space from the outdoor room to the uncovered outdoor play area allowing more covered outdoor play space for the children regardless of the weather.
- The playrooms were bright, with well-developed interest areas and were well maintained. A selection of the children's artwork, along with their birthdays and family photographs were prominently displayed.
- Suitably sized tables and chairs were available to the children. This supported mealtime routines and enabled the children to carry out tabletop activities.
- Shelving used to display play materials was positioned at a low height, which supported ease of access by children.
- The care rooms had a range of age and stage appropriate play resources available to children. For example:
  - furnished home areas, handheld vehicles, dolls and accessories supported imaginary play.
  - a variety of building blocks and bricks promoted construction play.
  - the development of fine motor skills was encouraged through the availability of play resources such as connectable shapes, threading materials, and jigsaws.

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- books supported language development. Soft seating areas, with books and soft toys, were included within the care rooms, for any child who may wish to opt out of scheduled activities or take some time to relax.
- Art and craft materials, paper, age-appropriate crayons and pencils and finger paints.
- A ball pool room which was situated beside Naíonra 2 offered climbing and ball play opportunities. A sensory room furnished with a free-standing lava fish lamp, disco ball and soft padded walls and flooring was also located near Naíonra 1. The registered provider stated while the children in Naíonra 2 had free access to both rooms. The children in Naíonra 1 had access to both the sensory and ball pool rooms as well.
- The outdoor play spaces provided opportunities for the children to engage in a variety of active play and exploration, through the availability of equipment such as climbing frame, balance apparatus, slides, encouraging the children to master gross motor skill play while playing outdoors. There was sand pit with cement mixers, tractors, diggers and dumpers to foster imaginary play.

### 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 entrance door was secured on arrival to the service.
- It was noted that the door to the adjoining kitchen of the registered provider was secured by staff when not in use, which prevented the children from gaining unsupervised access to this area.
- The first aid boxes were stored out of reach of the children.
- There was no cables or trailing flexes accessible to children on the day of inspection.
- Toys and play equipment were observed to be in good condition.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children on the day of inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- At the children's wash hand basins, there was a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels and lidded foot pedal operated bins. There was step ups in place at some of the wash hand basins allowing the children ease access to the wash hand basins. These facilities supported the practice of

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effective handwashing. It was noted that handwashing routines took place after the children had used the toilet and messy play and before snack times.

- Refrigerators were available in each of the playrooms in operation for storing perishable foods provided by parents.
- Tables were sanitised before mealtimes on day of inspection.
- Suitable storage was provided for the children's bags, outdoor clothing and footwear.
- There was one nappy changing station and three children's toilet facilities. There was one designated adult toilet facility. There were an adequate number of children's toilet and nappy changing facilities for the number of children present on day of inspection. All children were toilet trained on day of inspection therefore no nappy changing practises was observed.

### Safe Sleep:

- It was stated that all the children present were aged over two years, stackable beds and suitable bed linen were available as required if a child required a sleep. No child required a sleep at time of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.

## 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 registered provider ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that five staff members held current up to date training and all five staff were present on day of inspection.

(2)

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- (a) The first aid boxes were stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid boxes were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in each of the playrooms.
- (b) The fully equipped first aid boxes were available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 30 children until 27/03/2027. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.