

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LD011

Name of Service: Child's Play

Address of Service: Clonee
Killoe
Co. Longford
N39 HC99

Email Address: childisplay58@gmail.com

Name of Registered Service Provider: Ms. Florence Connell

Type of Service Registered: Sessional ☒

Date of Inspection: 1 3 0 6 2 0 2 2

No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection: AM 19 PM 0

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
181-189 Lakeshore Drive
Airside Business Park
Swords
Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6

Inspection undertaken by: S. Taaffe
Title: Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health Welfare and Development of Child	Safety

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

Description of Service	Child's Play is a privately-owned sessional early years service which has been in operation since 1996. The service caters for up to 20 pre-school children from the age of 2 years 8 months until they commence attendance in primary school. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 9.30am – 12.30pm from Monday to Friday for 38 weeks each year. School age children are not accommodated in the service.
Premises	Child's Play is conducted from two pre-school rooms, namely Room 1 and Room 2, which adjoins the registered provider's family home in a rural community in Co. Longford. Designated sanitary accommodation adjoins Room 1 and a spacious fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided for the service.
Staffing	The registered provider and two staff members work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis. One core staff member is currently on statutory leave and a staff member who was present during the inspection is employed through a childcare recruitment agency in a relief capacity on an on-going basis to cover this statutory leave.
Methodology	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (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. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 health welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. 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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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.
- (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:

The files maintained in relation to the registered provider, two core staff members and the staff member employed in a relief capacity were reviewed.

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was working directly with the children in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.35am on the day of inspection and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) and (b) There were two written references available for the registered provider and two written, validated references available for the two core staff members and the relief staff member employed through a childcare recruitment agency.

(a) Four of the eight written references reviewed were from past employers.

(b) Four of the eight written references reviewed were from sources other than past employers.

(c) Evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, for the two core staff members and for the staff member employed in a relief capacity.

(d) Not applicable as curricula vitae demonstrated that none of the adults whose files were reviewed had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

(4) The registered provider, the two core staff members and the relief staff member all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.*
- (3) *Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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)—*
- (c) *a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information:

(1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum adult to child ratio was maintained at all times.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In Room 1 there were 11 children aged 3-5 years being cared for by the registered provider and the staff member employed in a relief capacity.
- In Room 2 there were 8 children aged 3-4 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service is currently not operated single-handedly and there are three adults working directly with the children on a daily basis.

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:

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated on the day of inspection:

BASIC NEEDS:

The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred as evidenced in the sensitivity and positive regard shown by the registered provider and staff members to the children in their care. The registered provider and staff members were observed using welcoming facial expressions and warm vocal tones when engaging with the children and they showed a keen interest in what each child was doing, frequently providing praise and engaging the children in social conversations, making reference to the children's siblings, parents, grandparents and family pets by name. The children in turn showed confidence around the adults and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play.

- The inspector observed that children's transitions were supported. Familiar routines had been set up and children were observed to tidy up and start new activities with ease. Visual and verbal strategies were used by the adults to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.
- Healthy snacks and drinks were provided by the parents for the children for their morning snack which included sandwiches, rice cakes, crackers, fruit, cheese, and water to drink. The adults sat and chatted with the children during snack time, creating a relaxed and sociable atmosphere whilst encouraging the children to enjoy their snack in an unhurried manner. Drinking water was freely available to the children at snack time and throughout the session.
- The service's policy requires children to be toilet trained prior to commencement at the service. The children were supported to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision and assistance provided when required on the day of inspection.
- The children enthusiastically engaged in outdoor play on two separate occasions during the inspection and were dressed appropriately each time. The registered provider and staff members were observed providing assistance when necessary to remove some of the children's coats as the morning progressed and children reported feeling warm.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The children in Room 1 and Room 2 were provided with low level chairs and tables, for eating and when engaging in table-top activities. The toys, equipment and play materials were stored on open-fronted low-level shelves and were freely and readily accessible to the children; these included small-world materials (dolls house, furniture, figurines, dinosaurs, superheroes), transport materials (garages, vehicles, wooden trains and tracks), musical instruments, construction and manipulative materials (plastic and wooden blocks, interlocking cubes, threading beads, jigsaws and pegboards).
- The two care rooms were laid out in clearly defined interest areas to prompt children to engage in self-directed and imaginative play. Interest areas included home and kitchen corners, construction areas, arts and crafts zones, rest spaces and library corners. The service's entrance hall which adjoins Room 1 was used to facilitate small group activities and the registered provider stated that the layout of the two care rooms and the entrance hall was adapted and different play materials and equipment rotated into use based on the children's particular interests.
- Numerous samples of the children's artwork including a friendship tree and summer scenes were displayed on the walls in the service which demonstrated that children's creativity was valued and encouraged.
- The spacious outdoor play area was sub-divided by fencing into two separate areas with the children accommodated in the two care rooms facilitated to access each of the two separate sections on a weekly rotational basis. Surfacing in both areas contained a mix of natural grass, artificial grass, paving and concrete. An equally broad range of play equipment was provided in both sections of the outdoor play area to support children's play and activity. In the section closest to the service's entrance door equipment included a wooden outdoor kitchen resourced with pots, pans and kettles, dolls, prams and baby care items, a basket swing, a low-level slide with standing platform, bench-style seating and a metal shed enclosed by walls on three sides which provided the children with shelter from sun and rain. In the section closest to the road play equipment included a large well-resourced wooden outdoor kitchen, a basket swing, a wooden bridge, wooden balance beams, a broad-based plastic slide, a wooden story-time throne, a wooden playhouse, a sit-in 6-seated wooden car and bench-style seating. The outdoor kitchen in this section was located beneath a lean-to structure covered with transparent rigid plastic sheeting which provided shelter from sun or rain and which facilitated outdoor play in all weathers.

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:

The following are examples of measures undertaken by the registered provider to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service:

GENERAL SAFETY:

- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. The inspector was informed that the water supply was thermostatically controlled which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- Cleaning agents in the care rooms and in the sanitary accommodation were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided for the pre-school children both indoors and in the outdoor play area. The children were closely supervised by the registered provider and the two staff members when involved in outdoor play activities, with opportunities provided for challenge and safe risk under adult supervision. For example, a wooden bridge with sloped gangplanks was provided to facilitate climbing and physical activity for the children in attendance.

INFECTION CONTROL:

- There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service. Hand sanitiser gel containing 70% alcohol, stored out of the reach of children, was provided to facilitate additional hand hygiene procedures to be undertaken during attendance. Child-friendly hand hygiene pictorial posters were provided to remind staff and children on the appropriate hand washing technique. Children were gently reminded and facilitated to wash their hands before they ate, after using the toilet and following outdoor and messy play.
- When asked, staff members accurately described the symptoms of illness and infection, including signs of fever, and the procedures to be followed in the event of an adult or child becoming unwell whilst attending the service.
- The premises' play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition. There was a process in place for the cleaning of toys and equipment on a daily basis as evidenced by written records.
- Cleaning cloths were colour coded to indicate the purpose for which they were to be used in order to prevent cross contamination, as evidenced by information sheets on display in the service.
- The children's snacks were stored in two refrigerators in the pre-school rooms which reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying in the meat and dairy produce provided.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

Non-Compliance Information:	The following risks were identified that could impact on the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service: GENERAL SAFETY: 1. A gate in the outdoor play area was fitted with a low-level sliding bolt lock that a pre-school child could potentially open with ease; this gate opened from the outdoor play area to the adjoining yard and, from there, directly out onto the public roadway. A second gate in the outdoor play area was fitted with a low-level sliding bolt lock in addition to a high-level latch positioned out of the reach of children. This high-level latch was not secured which posed a risk that a child could open the gate and gain access to the adjoining roadway to the front of the premises. 2. The kitchen was accessible to children with the interconnecting door leading from Room 2 unlocked during the inspection. Kitchens contain a number of risks to the children's safety including access to the cooker, kettle, cutlery drawer, sharp utensils and cleaning products.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out: <u>CORRECTIVE ACTION</u> 1. First gate: small gate with lower latch is now secured with a nut and bolt. Second gate: top bolt is now always closed. 2. Hook has been erected with signage. <u>PREVENTIVE ACTION</u> 1. Outdoor risk assessment will be carried out by the Manager every morning, and before use of outdoor play area. Signage placed on outside door to remind staff to risk assess. Signage placed on outside gates as a reminder to staff to keep closed. 2. Manager checks door is locked every morning before session starts. This is included in the risk assessment.
Summary Comment:	The registered provider submitted the following documentary evidence: • A copy of an outdoor risk assessment for the service with specific reference to maintaining security at the gates leading in to the premises. • A copy of an indoor risk assessment including the requirement to ensure the kitchen door is locked before any child enters the room and the key is kept up on hook. • A range of photographs of signage in place both indoors and outdoors and photographs of appropriately secured gates and kitchen door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and evidence provided after the inspection. The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been resolved.

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: The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as the registered provider and two staff members held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training.

(2)(a) and (b) The suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location on the premises and was available at all times for the children in the event of an emergency.

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 fire fighting 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

Compliance Information: (1)(a) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly with the records indicating that the last fire drill took place on 04/05/2022.

(b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service which was certified as having most recently been serviced on 30/07/2021.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information: (1)(b) There was no up-to-date official maintenance record available for the smoke alarms in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire Safety Measures

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out: <u>CORRECTIVE ACTION</u> Official maintenance record is now in place. Electrician has carried out an inspection of the smoke detector in service. <u>PREVENTIVE ACTION</u> Maintenance will be carried out annually.
Summary Comment:	The registered provider submitted the following documentary evidence: • A maintenance record for the smoke alarms in the service dated 05/07/2022, provided by an electrical engineering company. The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and evidence provided after the inspection. The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1)(b) has been resolved.