

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK145
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Name of Service:	Radharc na Coille Preschool
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Address of Service:	Dromore, Kildimo, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 D258
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Cuddihy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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 service is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged 2.8 – 6 years, Monday – Friday from 08:45 to 11:45 and 12:00 to 15:00 for 38 weeks of the year, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme for eligible children. The service is operated from the registered providers dwelling house in the townland of Dromore, Kildimo, Co Limerick.

The pre-school children have access to their own designated playroom, hallway, sanitary accommodation for adults and children and an outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There is the registered provider, and 2 staff members present each day who work directly with the children attending the service.

These staff members all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 8 to 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

An additional staff member works in the service providing clerical and management support.

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 and safety. 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, staff 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*
- (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,*

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(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was 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 member of the team.

(2)(a) All staff files were reviewed. There were two written and validated references available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff working at the service. All the vetting disclosures were dated within the last three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff members had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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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.

(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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)

The service operates a morning session from 8.40am to 11.40 am and an evening session from 12.00 to 15.00pm. At the morning session there were 17 pre-school children present with 3 staff members and for the afternoon there were 20 pre-school children present with 3 staff members. The adult child ratio was compliant with the requirements of Regulation 11.

(3)

At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

An additional staff member works in the service and was available to help in the event of an emergency.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

A healthy eating policy was available at the service. Mealtimes were observed to be unhurried and relaxed. Each child had access to their own cup, beaker and parents provided children with a healthy snack and drinks each day for their lunch. All perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator until required at each session. The staff sat with the children at mealtimes, supporting and encouraging the children to eat safely and ensured there were opportunities for conversation between the children and staff.

Sanitary accommodation and nappy changing facilities were located next to the playroom. The staff assisted each child to wash their hands using the hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels to dry. Each child has access to a change of clothes if needed.

The room had a supply of tissues and wipes, and foot pedal operated, lidded bins were accessible for the safe disposal of waste.

The staff interacted with the children in a caring and respectful manner. Staff were observed conversing with the children at their level, using a soft tone of voice and staff responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's personal interests and capabilities. Staff supported the children to be independent in their chosen play-based activities both individually and as part of a group.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Room layout and designs were arranged to ensure the opportunity for different types of play and learning were available and accessible in the playroom of the service. The atmosphere was unhurried and encouraging and children appeared content and all were actively engaged in numerous activities.

There were clearly defined, well developed interest areas with age-appropriate resources available to children depending on their age and stage of development.

The playroom was a large, spacious, and bright area with low level open shelving available to display play equipment. Defined interest areas included library areas, construction areas, imaginative play areas with props for home corner, manipulative play areas and small world areas

Low level tables and chairs were in place for the different tabletop activities such as pasting, colouring, puzzles and jigsaws. Messy play activities for sensorial development such as painting, colouring with crayons, rice in the turf tray were available in the room. A spacious outdoor area was accessible directly off this room and children had opportunities to be outside as much as possible every day. The children were observed moving freely in the indoor and outdoor environment throughout the day.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Each child was checked in by an adult on arrival to the service. At home time each child was checked out by an adult. The time of arrival and departure was documented for each child.
- (3) No person other than a child attending the service, a person dropping or collecting a child, an employee or an unpaid worker could enter the premises without prior approval.
- (b) All visitors were signed in and out, documenting their time of arrival and departure and the reason for their visit. The name of the person who admitted them to the building was also recorded.

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 staff at the service had completed first aid responder training and their certs were available in their file.
- (2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required.

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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) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The first recorded fire drill for the new preschool year was on the 29th of September 2024.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was not serviced on an annual basis. The maintenance record demonstrated that the firefighting equipment were last serviced in January 2024 and the smoke alarm system was serviced in October 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 22 preschool children to attend each of the sessional service. The insurance cover commenced on the 4th of March 2024 and expires on the 27th of March 2025.