

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH034
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Name of Service:	Colpe DayCare
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Address of Service:	Colpe Rd, Drogheda, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 VE8W
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mairead Haigney
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	9
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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

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

Colpe Day Care is a privately owned early years service which has been operated by the registered provider in her family home for the past 44 years. The service provides full day care, part-time and sessional care to pre-school children from 1 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 8.00am - 4:30pm daily, running over 38 weeks annually and closing for school holidays. Colpe Day Care participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) from 8.45 – 11.45am daily. School aged children are not accommodated in the service. Colpe Day Care is conducted from 2 care rooms provided on the ground floor of the registered provider's family home, namely the Crèche Room located in the sitting room to the front of the premises where the youngest children are accommodated and the Playgroup Room located in a sunroom to the rear of the premises where pre-school children aged 2 years 8 months and older are accommodated. A further room on the ground floor is set up as a cot room, while a kitchen and sanitary facilities are also provided at this level. A spacious well-maintained outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 3 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children on a daily basis. The registered provider does not work directly with the pre-school children but is also present in the service on a daily basis, coordinating the operational management, engaging in administrative duties and communicating with parents when required.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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.

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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

(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 was the designated person in charge of the service in an administrative capacity while a named staff member who works directly with the pre-school children was nominated as the deputy person in charge as required.

(b) The registered provider and the designated deputy person in charge were both present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.30am. Both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

A total of 4 staff files were reviewed, maintained in respect of the registered provider and the 3 staff members employed in the service.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written references available for the registered provider and 2 written, validated references available for the 3 staff members.

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- (a) Two written references were from past employers.
- (b) Six written references were from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and the 3 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) International police vetting was available as required for 1 staff member who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) All 3 staff members who work directly with pre-school children in the service 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.*
- (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)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times*

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 adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the premises and remained so throughout the inspection.
- In the Crèche Room there were 2 children aged 1 year 10 months and 2 years 9 months being cared for by 1 staff member.

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- In the Playgroup Room there were 11 children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 9 months being cared for by 1 staff member. Four of these 11 children were attending the service on a sessional basis on the day of the inspection.

A third staff member was present who provided relief and support to both care rooms during the inspection including at mealtimes, for nappy changing and for break cover when required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in the staff attendance records maintained in the service.

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 examples demonstrate how the registered provider and staff members ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic needs:

- The registered provider and staff members were observed to be respectful and warm in their interactions with the children in their care.
- The children's parents were required to provide all snacks and meals for their children to eat while in attendance in the service. Healthy and nutritious food was provided from home which was observed being served at 10.30am and 1.00pm during the inspection. The children's water bottles were available for the children to take from low level shelving throughout the day, should they feel thirsty at any stage. The staff members were observed to sit at the children's level at snack and mealtimes, chatting to the children in a relaxed and sociable manner.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with the staff members heard chatting warmly to the children during these procedures. The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues, should they need to use the toilet with gentle prompting, discreet supervision provided and assistance if required.

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- The child in the Crèche Room who slept during the inspection was facilitated to sleep in a cot when they showed signs of tiredness. Children aged 2 years and older had the option to sleep on stackable beds set up in the sleep room, although none of these older children slept during the inspection.
- All children engaged in outdoor play during the inspection, including the two youngest children in the Crèche Room who were playing outdoors with a staff member when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service on the morning of the inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- The children appeared to be comfortable and relaxed with the registered provider and the three staff members who cared for them on a daily basis. The staffing consistency promoted the development and sustainment of relationships between the registered provider, staff members, children and their parents.
- The staff members greeted children and parents positively and warmly on arrival and departure, spending time conversing and sharing information in a friendly way.
- The staff members were observed providing encouragement and praise to the children for engaging in activities and completing tasks during the inspection.
- The registered provider and staff members were observed collaborating with each other regarding the children's preferences and needs, and the implementation of play activities.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Suitable low-level tables and chairs were provided for the children and these were used for table-top activities and when eating.
- In both rooms the play materials and equipment were stored on low-level shelving to facilitate the children to select and replace items of interest independently.
- The interest areas in the Crèche Room included a home corner, a construction zone, a farm area and a reading and relaxation area, all of which were suitably resourced to facilitate the children to engage in play and activity and support their learning and development. The inspector was informed that the interest areas in the Playgroup Room were revised on a regular basis, taking account of the space available and the children's interests. A large range of additional play equipment and materials were stored in an outdoor cabin which staff members reported were rotated for use into the service on a regular basis.

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Jigsaws and manipulative toys, small world toys including vehicles, animals, people and figurines, magnetic toys, matching games, wooden and plastic bricks and musical instruments were amongst the play materials provided in the Playgroup Room. Some of these items were selected by the children and placed on the wooden tables, on a large tray-top activity table and on the floor for individual and group play during the inspection.

- There was a suitable range of books available in the two care rooms to support children's language development and provide choice at story time.
- All children were afforded the opportunity for a change of environment in the well-resourced and well-maintained outdoor play area and were dressed appropriately prior to going outside. The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises and was subdivided by fencing into separate spaces, with the smaller enclosed space designated for use by the younger children attending the Crèche Room. This grass-surfaced area contained five low-level plastic climbing frames with slides attached, a seesaw with surround seats to allow the children sit securely, and a swing set with two seats fitted with harnesses, leg dividers and head rests. The larger grass-surfaced area contained three separate swing sets, three plastic playhouses, slides, a large lidded sandpit, an outdoor kitchen, raised planting beds and a wide selection of ride-on toys. A separate concrete surfaced area was also provided and children were observed using ride-on toys in this section.

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 the measures undertaken by the registered providers and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service:

General Safety:

- The entrance doors and the side gates to the rear of the premises were appropriately secured which prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised and prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

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- The outdoor play area was enclosed by boundary walls and fencing to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining entry or a pre-school child from gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on high shelving out of reach of children.
- The kitchen, when unoccupied, was inaccessible to children during the inspection.
- A fixed fire guard enclosed the fire place in the Crèche Room, making it inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided for handwashing in the sanitary accommodation.
- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and used for nappy changing. A pedal operated lidded nappy bin was provided for the disposal of nappies which reduced the risk of cross-infection.
- Children's hands were washed after nappy changing. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy play and outdoor play.
- Tissues were available for wiping noses and appropriate hand hygiene practices were observed being undertaken when staff members assisted children to clean their noses.
- The children's meals and snacks, provided from home, were refrigerated on arrival to the service. This reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No child was observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The records indicated and staff members reported that sleep checks were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting the child's position, colour and breathing pattern.
- The ambient temperature in the sleep room was maintained within the optimum sleep room temperature range of 18-22°C for sleeping children aged 1 year and older.
- Based on an examination of the children's attendance records maintained in the service, all children under 2 years of age had access to a standard cot on a daily basis.

Fire Safety:

- Exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and all 3 staff members. However, 2 of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

1. Garda vetting acquired and submitted.

Preventive Action

1. Annual check to be completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the two relevant up-dated Garda vetting disclosures were submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider after the inspection. The non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. Details of children's daily attendance including arrival and departure times were recorded in roll books maintained for each care room in the service.
- (3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspector was requested to record her attendance on the premises and the purpose of her visit.

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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service as evidenced in the FAR training records.
- (2)(a)(b) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service, out of reach of the children. The first aid box was recently re-stocked with a suitable supply of first aid supplies.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was kept of fire drills that took place on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 14/10/2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in July 2024 and the smoke detection system on 07/08/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

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 insurance cover in place for 27 pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis. The attendance records and children's registration forms confirmed and the registered provider stated that no more than 27 children were present in the service on a daily basis. The policy was valid from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.