

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY033
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Name of Service:	Lakeside Creche
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Address of Service:	Lakeside Hotel, Ballina, Killaloe, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	V94 E2D6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Regina O'Dwyer
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional, Drop-In
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Date of Inspection:	12/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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

This service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old on a sessional, part-time or drop-in basis. This includes a morning session for children aged 2 – 6 years old, 9.15am – 12.15pm, Monday to Friday. The opening hours of the service are 9am – 2pm.

The service is operated from a room on the ground floor of a hotel in the village of Ballina in north Tipperary. The service consists of an activity room, sanitary accommodation area and outdoor play area which are for the exclusive use of the children attending the service. Staff toilets and nappy changing facilities are shared with the hotel.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service each day supported by two other members of staff, including one member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM).

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(4)(8), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3) and 29.

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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.

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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.

(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 staff files of two staff members were reviewed as part of the inspection process, one for the member of staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 24 January 2022, and one for an existing member of staff to update previous information.

(2)(a) Not applicable as none of the available references were from past employers.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of both members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of both members of staff and relevant documents retained on file. Garda vetting was renewed every three years in line with best practice guidelines.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state and relevant documents were held on file.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the national qualifications framework.

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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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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) There were 3 staff working directly with 11 children aged between 2 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There were 2 staff working directly with 4 children who were present in the service for the afternoon.

(4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11 for the morning session and 1:8 for the afternoon.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children have daily access to their activity room and to an outdoor play area directly outside their room. The room was bright and comfortable with several designated interest areas such as a cosy corner, tabletop activities and dining area, home corner, small world areas and construction areas.

(b) There was a cosy corner in the room with a sofa, large cushions, floor rug, soft toys and bookshelves. This area was used by the children during the day when they wanted to play quietly or rest away from the general play area. Sleep mats were available for use if a child wanted to sleep while attending the service. Most of the children attended for up to three hours each day and most were aged over three years. Staff said that children rarely slept in the service though this was facilitated when required.

(3)(a) The children had daily access to an enclosed outdoor play area which had been developed outside the window of the service for the exclusive use of children attending the service. The ground surface was concrete paving stones, which had been partially covered with artificial grass. There was a covered area which provided shelter and allowed outdoor play in all weathers. The outdoor equipment and materials included ride on toys, sand and water play areas, fairy and dinosaur village, wall mounted blackboards with chalk, slide and planting areas. The space was enclosed by metal fencing and a gate which separated the space from a roadway and parking area. A screen of artificial foliage had been attached to part of the metal fencing to act as a windbreak and to provide some privacy to the children while they played outside.

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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 was well furnished and equipped for the number of children who attended the service and their ages. There were child sized tables and chairs where the children sat to eat and to do activities such as art. There were also adult sized chairs and a two-seater sofa. Open shelving units stored toys and equipment at the children's height and easily accessible to them. There were lockable storage cupboards along one wall for seasonal equipment, rotated toys and for stocks of paper, paints and art materials to replenish the art/mark making area. A wooden house was built into the corner of the room which was fitted out as a home area with kitchen, dolls and accessories. Separate resources were available for outdoor play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Children brought packed lunches to eat in the morning at 11am. Children who remained in the service after the morning session, brought additional food to eat in the afternoon. The service also kept some snacks such as yoghurts and crackers which could be given to a child who was hungry.

Perishable foods were stored in the fridge in the room. Drinking water was available in the room. Children bought their own drink bottles filled with water or squash that were refilled by staff when empty.

Food eaten on the day of inspection included: sandwiches, wraps, crackers, rice cakes, bread rolls, croissants, meat slices, yoghurt, fromage frais and fruit (apples, mandarins and watermelon).

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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*

Compliance Information

- (1) Staff maintained a written register of the arrival and departure of each child.
- (3)(a) Staff ensured that only authorised persons entered the service while it was in operation.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
 - (b) safe and secure,*
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure. Staff said that they were not aware of any problems with the structure of the building.
- (b) The premises was safe and secure. The service was accessed via a door from a ground level corridor of the hotel, adjacent to the leisure centre and an exit to a car parking area. The door of the service was kept secured while the service was in operation. Entry to and exit from the service was managed by the staff.

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(c) The service was naturally lit through a window in one wall supplemented by artificial lighting. The window was kept open while the service was in operation to ensure adequate ventilation of the room. Heating was not required on the day of inspection as the weather was mild. A new electric radiator had been fitted in the service since the last inspection. This replaced an older, smaller model. Staff said that the new radiator was effective in maintaining the room temperature within the recommended range. Sanitary accommodation areas used by the service were lit and ventilated by electrical means.

(d) The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. Both indoor and outdoor environments, toys, equipment, materials and surfaces were clean and well maintained. There was a cleaning schedule for the service. Staff were responsible for cleaning tasks in the service.

(e) There was a toilet and wash hand basin for use by the children, directly accessible from the activity room. This was sufficient for use by up to 11 toilet trained children. The service had access to a second children's toilet when required. This was located off the corridor outside the service entrance and was part of the facilities of the hotel. The staff sanitary accommodation area and nappy changing area were shared with the leisure centre of the hotel and were located along the corridor from the service entrance.

On the day of inspection there were 7 toilet trained children and 4 children who were not yet toilet trained present in the service with 3 staff. There was sufficient sanitary accommodation available for the number of staff and children present.