

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL077
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Name of Service:	Magic Moments Playschool
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Address of Service:	1 Sea Crest, Shore Road, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 H221
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deborah Boyle
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	S McKenna N Toner
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Magic Moments Playschool is a privately owned early years' service, located in Buncrana town, North Donegal. The service is operated from a purpose built two storey building, with an outdoor area to the front. The service offers a sessional preschool between the hours of 9:00hrs and 12:30hrs, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 months to 6 years of age. The service operates for 38 weeks of the year. There is two room in the service. One room is located upstairs, and the second room is located downstairs.

Staffing

There are 3 staff employed to work directly with the children. The registered provider also works in the service. All staff have relevant qualifications to work with the children.

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 an 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 20, 23 & 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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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 inspectors wish 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.

(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 service has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as needed.

(b)

On the day of inspection, the person in charge or deputy person in charge was always onsite.

(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 employee and unpaid worker.

(2)

The registered provider confirmed that there were four staff caring for the preschool children in total in the service. This included the registered provider.

(a) Four staff files had references from previous employers.

(b) Two staff had references on file from other sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not needed for any staff members as they had not lived outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4)

Documentary evidence was presented to demonstrate that four staff members had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 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.

(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)

There were 4 staff working directly with 24 children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

(3)

The minimum sessional service staffing ratio was adhered to with 4 adults working directly with 24 children. There were 2 rooms in the service, 8 children were in the upstairs room with 1 adult. 17 children were in the downstairs room with 3 adults.

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the inspector's arrival to the service, four children greeted them dressed up as police officers, fire officers and chefs. Children were enjoying the role play and learning about the community services. There was ample space for children to play and interact with each other. The downstairs room was L shaped with different areas of play seen such as dolls, doll houses, play farms and kitchen zones. There were also sand and water play areas for sensory play. Separate groups of children were playing with the varied materials available to them. After the morning snack, children played "bus driver" where they all lined up the chairs in the shape of a bus and pretended, they were going on holidays. The staff interacted well with the children throughout the day. Staff were down at the children's level and using low tones when required. Other times staff were animated to engage the children in games. The staff members could be seen working closely with the children all morning, involved in their games and promoting independence where possible i.e. starting a jigsaw and letting the children finish it. Staff showed different ways of interacting with the children, such as, small group tabletop activities (modelling clay, jigsaws & dolls). Staff was seen to interact on a more one to one level with other children who wanted to do an activity on their own. Staff playing with children on their own then encouraged them to join the group to have circle time. The children and staff all sang the days of the week song and then read poems and stories. The staff members acted out the stories in an imaginative playful way which the children enjoyed.

Morning snack was a relaxed, social occasion. Staff promoted healthy eating and independence, allowing children to eat at their own pace at appropriately sized tables. During snack time children were seen to be offered plates and water in cups to drink from. Staff sat and engaged with children in conversation at their tables during snack time. Activities were provided for those who finished early to ensure a calm transition. Children had unrestricted access to toilets. Staff supported children, developing independence in toileting and consistent hand hygiene before meals and after bathroom use. Dedicated individual storage (cubbies and hooks) for personal belongings and extra clothing was provided outside the playroom downstairs in the service. Children were seen to be supported by the staff to practice independence when dressing for outdoor play. Children explored the environment and had opportunities to take part in different activities with a variety of equipment and materials available to them. The routine in the service was flexible in nature and followed the needs of the children. The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Learning through song and artwork was suitable for the developmental age of the children in the service. Staff discussed the routine which was displayed on the wall of the service. Staff move at the children's pace and the routine states that it is flexible to meet with the children's needs each day. In

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the indoor space, arts and crafts was promoted strongly with art displayed all around the service. There was a strong valentines day theme running and children had designed posters and cards for their families. The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, calm, and sensitive manner. Verbal and non-verbal interactions were conducted using low tones and at the child's level throughout the morning. There was a wall in each care room, with pictures of the children's families. The staff could be seen showing respect for each child and developing trust in a fun and meaningful way. Strong care practices were clear throughout the day, promoting children's independence through eating and toileting. Staff had in place individual books for each child containing pictures and artwork from the child, this was shared with parents to keep them informed of the activities and creating the child had done while in the service.

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 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The service provided a high-quality environment, designed to support both energetic activity and quiet reflection. The floor in the downstairs room was designed to promote creativity, forming a colourful jigsaw pattern. The indoor space was spread into different interest areas around the upstairs and downstairs rooms. This included, a dedicated dress-up area and a fully equipped play kitchen facilitate role-play and social interaction. The library area had a soft seating area and a varied book collection. This provided a calm space for children to rest or engage in learning through the wide variety of age friendly books available. A range of jigsaws which were suitable to the age of the children attending the service were readily available.

The secure outdoor area provided opportunities for gross motor development such as pushbikes and scooters. This allowed children to practice balance and coordination through play. Climbing toys and open spaces were used for adventurous play, offering supervised risky play necessary for building physical confidence. Fixed

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features like hopscotch gave structured opportunities for children to develop balance and social turn taking skills.

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 gate in and out of the service was secured when children played outdoors.
- Window restrictors were fitted to all first-floor windows to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning products were securely stored to be inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Play materials were in good condition.
- All storage areas were secured to ensure they remained inaccessible to children.
- Fire exits were free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- Children showed good hand hygiene practices after using the toilet.
- Staff cleaned tables before and during the meals in the service.
- Cleaning schedule was in place on the day of inspection.
- The service was kept in clean condition.
- Ventilation was adequate in all rooms and sanitary areas.
- Snacks were taken in from home and perishable foods were stored in a fridge in the service.
- Foot operated bins present in the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits free were from obstruction.
- Monthly fire drills are conducted by the service and logged in a fire safety folder.

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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)

Three staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) in the service on the day of inspection, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

(a) There was first aid box safely stored and easily accessible to staff on the premises.

(b) the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service on the day of inspection.