

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023FL002
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Name of Service:	María del Carmen Fontecha Dones
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Address of Service:	19 Millrace Court, Phoenix Park Racecourse, Castleknock, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D15 TY49
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Name of Registered Provider:	María del Carmen Fontecha Dones
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	31/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne
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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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Maria del Carmen Fontecha Dones is a privately run single handed childminding service which caters for children from birth to 3 years. The service is a full-time service from 8.30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday, September to July. The service can cater for a maximum of 5 children at any one time

Staffing

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was present to care for the children in their home. An emergency contact person who was familiar with the service was present and available to assist the registered provider in the event of an emergency

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 announced 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 the regulations.

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2),

Regulation 12 Childminders,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire safety

Regulation 28 Insurance

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, the emergency contact person and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(2) Two staff files were reviewed and the following was available;

(a)(b) One reference from a past employer and one reference from reputable source were available for the registered provider.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for both the registered provider and the emergency contact person.

(d) Police vetting was available for the registered provider and the emergency contact person who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The registered provider held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and was available upon the inspector's arrival and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(8)(b) A second person who is familiar with the operation of the service is available to provide assistance to the childminder at all times and was located within close distance of the service in the event of an emergency.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 12 - Childminders

(1) A childminder shall ensure that-

(a) there are no more than 5 pre-school children in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children,

(b) subject to paragraph (2), there are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children, and

(c) there is a working telephone on the premises.

(2) A childminder may have more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time where all such children are siblings of each other.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) On the day of inspection, there were four children in attendance with six children on the register. Records indicated there were no more than five children in attendance at any one time.

(b) There are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in the care of the registered provider at any given time, including their own pre-school children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(c) A working telephone was available on the premises

(2) Not Applicable as there was no siblings in attendance that were under the age of 15months old.

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)

Basic needs:

- Children were provided with suitable meals and snacks at regular intervals during the inspection. Morning snack comprised of orange slices, bananas and breadsticks. Lunch was homemade vegetable soup with cheese quesadillas. Water was available and accessible should a child require a drink. Additional food was made available to children when they requested it. On the day of inspection, the inspector observed the four children enjoying their fruit snack at 10.00am and lunch at 11.30am.
- The four children had their snack sitting at a low table with chairs that were appropriate to their ages. Mealtimes were unhurried and promoted social interaction with their peers and with the registered provider and emergency contact person present with the children.
- On arrival to the childminder service, the inspector observed that the children were returning indoors for morning snack following a period of outdoor play activities.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The registered provider discussed with the inspector that communication with parents is completed verbally at drop off /collection times and through a messaging application to include children's daily routine and activities as per the service policy.
- The registered provider was observed to be warm and kind towards the children in their care evidenced by soft language use of open-ended questions and use of each child's individual names during play time.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Physical and material environment:

- The enclosed outdoor play area consisted of artificial grass with composite decking with an overhead shelter to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. Outdoor play was incorporated into service curriculum and the children enjoyed outdoor play during the inspection. The children had access to the following equipment which included soft matting, a slide, an outdoor play kitchen with supporting play food and equipment and trucks.
- Children had access to a variety of equipment and materials. For example, indoors, the following was available:
 - A Home corner area with a kitchen, play food, delph, pots and pans, play kettle, play coffee machine and an age-appropriate toy cash register.
 - A small world play area with playhouse, animals, dinosaurs
 - Tabletop activities of wooden puzzles, jigsaws, shape sorters, plastic bricks and blocks.
 - Imaginary play dolls and dolls clothes, doctors set, play work tools, instruments.
 - Pop up tents and tunnels were available for gross motor development.
 - There was an adult sofa, a cosy corner bench with cushions and a soft mat are available in the main care room should a child need to take a break from activities.

Programme of activities

- During the inspection the inspector observed many activities which the registered provider organised and completed with the children, these activities were as follows:
Outdoor play, dancing to music, setting up play tents and tunnels, free play with sorting toys and wooden puzzles, blowing bubbles and bursting them, playing with dolls, playing at the play kitchen with play food and equipment and painting with painting pens.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspector observed that the entrance door was secure to facilitate the supervised entrance and exit of visitors and children.
- Attendance records were present, completed and accurate.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

- The service was visually clean on the day of inspection and the provider was observed cleaning the tables prior to the children's lunch.
- Cleaning records and Health and safety daily checklists were completed and available.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap, and hand towels.
- Handwashing was completed after outdoor play, before meals and after nappy changing, as per the service infection control policy.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were available for waste disposal.
- Windows were open in the care room allowing for the circulation of air.
- Nappy changing was completed at set times and when needed as per the service nappy changing policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Record of ten-minute sleep checks on all sleeping children to include colour, breathing, position and room temperature were completed and available for inspection.
- Children under the age of 2 years had access to a standard cot for sleep.
- Children over the age of 2 years had access to floor sleep mats for sleep.
- Room temperatures for the sleep rooms were recorded and maintained between the recommended 18 – 22°C for children over 1 years of age.
- Soft music was played which created a calm atmosphere to comfort the children at sleep time.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 registered provider was qualified in first aid for children and is available on the premises at all times.

(2) (a) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the kitchen accessible to the care room inspected

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for use by the adult in the event of an emergency was available to the children in the service.

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 written record was reviewed by the inspector for fire drills completed and the last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on the 30th of January 2024.

(b) The number type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment were last serviced in July 2024 and the smoke alarms were last serviced on 1st November 2023.

(4) The fire drill procedure was displayed on the wall of the premises and observed by the Inspector.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 6 children of which five were pre-school children with an expiry date of 17th October 2024.