

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC003
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	A Breath of Fresh Air Full Day Care
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Aghamarta, Carrigaline, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P43 AX75
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ailish Thompson
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	25	PM	
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Creagh and J Russell
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

A Breath of Fresh Air is a privately run early years service registered to provide full day care, part time and sessional care for children aged from 6 months to 6 years. The service is based in a rural area and operates from a detached two storey building that was adapted as a childcare facility. Daily opening hours are from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

It has two care rooms in operation, namely, the Creche room which is situated on the ground floor, and the Junior Montessori room which is situated on the second floor. There is a dedicated sleep room and an outdoor area, adjacent to the Creche room. The service is one of three services operated by the registered provider.

### Staffing

The service has 18 staff attached to it, not all of whom are working at all times. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. On the day of inspection eight staff were working directly with the children. All of the staff working in the service providing care to the pre-school children held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9: Management and Recruitment, Regulation 10: Policies, Procedures of a Preschool Service, Regulation 11: Staffing levels, Regulation 19: Health, Welfare and Development of a Preschool Child, Regulation 25: First Aid, however on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 manager, person in charge, 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

(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) There was a designated person in charge assigned to the service, along with a named person who could deputise, as required.
  - (b) The person in charge was present at the childcare facility, upon the inspectors unannounced arrival and facilitated the duration of the inspection. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was consistently available at the service, during operational hours.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of 18 adults attached to the service were reviewed and the following was noted:
- (a) 26 of the 36 required written and validated references were from past employers.

(b) 10 of the 36 required written and suitably validated references were from sources other than previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 18 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting records were available on file for the six adults, who had lived outside the State for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of 18.

(4) 18 of the adults held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed:

- Administration of medication policy
- Safe sleep policy
- Healthy eating policy

These policies contained the relevant information to guide staff in their care practices for children.

### 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) The person in charge ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the pre-school children at all times to meet the needs of the children in attendance.

(2) The adult child ratios on the day of inspection met the requirements of the regulations as follows:

- Creche room: five staff caring for 10 children
- Junior Montessori room: three staff caring for 15 children.

(8) (a) The registered provider did ensure that a minimum of two adults were always on the premises during the hours of operation.

### 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,*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### BASIC NEEDS:

- The snacks and meals on the day of inspection were served at appropriate times and children were able to access their drinks throughout the day; the children's reusable water bottles were stored on low-level shelves. Assistance was given to the children that required help with feeding and opening packaging and children were observed to be self-sufficient where possible.
- The inspector was informed by staff that nappy changing was carried out at designated daily intervals and as the need arose. Older children were encouraged to use sanitary facilities independently, with supervision and verbal reminders provided as needed.
- Within the care rooms, adequate space was available to accommodate a range of activities, such as messy play, use of wheeled toys, tabletop play, construction activities and imaginary play.
- A relaxed and calm environment was provided for the children, and the adults were observed to speak kindly and encouraging to the children.

- During discussion with staff in the Creche room, and observation on the day of inspection, it was noted that in addition to facilitating routine nap times, staff also accommodated children to sleep according to their requirements, for example when a child displayed signs of tiredness.

### **SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:**

- Each staff member was assigned to a care room. The children knew and were accustomed to the staff and staff were observed to spend time comforting the children as needed.
- When a child was observed to require comfort in the Creche room, a staff member cuddled them and walked around holding them to soothe them. Once comforted they were able to return to playing.
- Family trees were displayed in the care rooms which supported the children's sense of identity and belonging.
- Transitions were managed well with staff informing children when they were moving from one activity to the next, such as when moving from free play to snack time.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

- Each of the care rooms had a variety of toys and resources, specific to the ages and development of the children attending each room, i.e. wheeled toys to support motor development in the Creche room, and chalk to support fine motor development in the Junior Montessori room.
- The shelving in all care rooms was accessible and the children were able to choose their activities as required.
- The outdoor area was well utilised on the day of inspection, which allowed for more play and exploration.

## 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 front door of the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock. This minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the service.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving or secured cupboards, out of the reach of children.
- The windows were high and out of children's reach.
- The glass door had art displayed on it which indicated its presence to the children attending.

- Toys and play equipment were safe for the age group using them, in good condition, and free from pinch and crush points, exposed bolts or sharp edges.
- High- level fencing was provided in the outdoor play area, at the side of the building.
- No hot drinks were observed to be consumed by the staff near the children.

### Infection Control:

- A refrigerator was available and utilised for the storage of perishable snacks and meals.
- Pedal operated bins were available throughout the premises.
- The wash hand basins throughout the premises were provided with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- The nappy changing area was clean and well maintained. Each of the changing mats were intact with no tears observed. A supply of disposable aprons and gloves were available at the nappy changing area. Nappies were disposed of in pedal operated bins, and no odour was evident in the nappy changing rooms. Children had named individual shelves for the storage of their nappies and toiletries.
- The care rooms and sanitary facilities were adequately ventilated through natural and mechanical ventilation.

### Administration of Medication:

- The inspectors were advised by staff in both care rooms that none of the children were in receipt of medication, at the time of inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room adjacent to the Creche room had an adequate number of standard sized cots for the children to sleep.
- The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every 10 minutes on the service's electronic application system. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were illuminated with appropriate signage.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. There was a loose cable accessible to the children attending the Creche room, posing a risk of strangulation.

#### Fire Safety:

2. A fire exit door was key locked, posing a safety risk during a fire evacuation.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The loose cable was secured to the wall.

#### Fire Safety:

2. The lock on the fire exit door has been replaced with a traditional latch lock.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the cable tacked to the wall.

#### Fire Safety:

2. Photographic evidence of installation of a traditional latch lock has been received.

## Summary Comment

Regulatory compliance is determined to have been met based on the evidence submitted and the statements from the person in charge.

## 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) There was an adequate number of staff members trained in First Aid Responder (FAR). The staff roster demonstrated that at least one staff member with FAR was available on the premises at all times.

(2)(a) The first aid box was safely stored on a high shelf and was appropriately stocked with in-date sterile dressings.

(b) The first aid equipment was available to the children at all times.