

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC008				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	ABC'S and 123's Pre-School				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Scoil Isogain, Spa Glen, Mallow, Co. Cork				
<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 K095				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa Cronin				
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/12/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>15</td> <td>PM</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </table>	AM	15	PM	9
AM	15	PM	9		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork, P51 DD5Y				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Friel				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

ABC's and 123's Pre-school is a private, sessional, early years care and education service in operation since 2011. While registered to accommodate children aged from 2 – 6 years the service currently caters for children aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years of age. The Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in the morning from 08:45 to 11:45 and in the afternoon from 12:00 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, term time only. The service is located at the rear of Scoil Iosagain in the town of Mallow in North Cork. It operates from a purpose built, single storey childcare building which has a dedicated outdoor area which is partially covered. The building consists of an entrance hallway off which there are adult and children's toilets and the main care room. A secure outdoor play area is accessible at the front and back of the service.

### Staffing

There are four adults employed to work directly with the children in the service including two adults employed under the Access and inclusion Model (AIM), one of whom is the registered provider. In addition, a student was on placement and a relief worker is available in the event of staff absence.

### 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 and 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, deputy, 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,*
- (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 register provider was the designated person in charge and a named person was available to deputise, as required.
- (b) Both the registered provider and the deputy were observed working in the service while the pre-school children were present.
- (c) A detailed management structure was available on the noticeboard and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Recruitment files of all six adults were reviewed;
- (a) (b) There were twelve validated references available; eleven from past employers and one from sources other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all six adults which evidenced compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.
- (4) There was evidence that four adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, one adult had a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The student on placement did not require a childcare qualification.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) While an international police vetting disclosure was available for a second adult it could not be assessed as it required translation into English.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(d) The international police vetting disclosure was translated into English and is now on available on file. In future vetting which requires translation will be completed prior to commencement of employment.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(d) A copy of the translated international police vetting into English, with an official stamp, was received in the office of the inspectorate. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

### Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2) (d).

## 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) Observation of staff on the day along with the staff roster evidenced that there were an adequate number of adults available while the pre-school children were present in the service.

(3) The adult/child ratios were met.

Age Range	Type of Service	Children Present	Adults Present	Minimum Number of Adults required
3 – 4 years	Sessional AM	15	2 Adult 2 AIM Support 1 Student	2
2 years 8 months – 4 years	Sessional PM	9	3 Adults 1 AIM 1 Student	1

(8)

(c) The registered provider, who works in the service, does not operate the sessional service single handedly.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.

## Compliance Information

(1) A sample of eleven pre-school records of children attending the service were reviewed. The following particulars were found to be compliant on all eleven records; (1) (a) to (i) above.

(3)  
(c) The children's pre-school records were reviewed by the inspector on the premises on the day of inspection.

## 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

### BASIC NEEDS:

- Children snacks, provided by the parents/guardians, in both the morning and afternoon sessions were observed to be healthy and nutritious in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Examples included filled sandwiches, fruit and yogurt. Each child was able to access water or fruit juice throughout each session from their own individual bottles stored in easily accessible cubby boxes.
- Children were accompanied to the sanitary area where they were observed making use of a step up to reach the toilet. A staff member was available to provide assistance with handwashing at the sink and was heard reminding the children to wash their hands after toileting.
- A rest/quiet area with soft furnishings including a large red bean bag and a small hippo bean bag were available for the children to sit away from noisy activities.
- A spare set of clothing, observed to be stored in each child's cubby box, was available in the event of a child requiring changing.
- Staff were observed adjusting the level of support in the care room to ensure that individual children's needs were being met.

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- During table top activities, snack and circle time staff were observed engaging the children in social conversation. In addition, staff were observed using these occasions to extend the children's thinking and learning by using strategies including modelling and demonstrating, open questioning and explaining.

Examples included staff explaining what was going to happen next and showing the children how to use equipment such as a plastic ball opener in the tuft try to collect stars and rice by opening and closing the handles.

- Staff interactions with the children were noted to be warm, caring and sensitive. Examples included staff members communicating empathetically to a child whose physical behaviour indicated that the child was not their usual happy self and who was not interested in eating snack when staff stated they would otherwise have eaten at that time.
- Staff were observed supporting the children to positively engage with each other around turn taking and sharing of activities and resources.
- Details of quarterly staff meetings with management were furnished to the inspector which included such topics as term time holidays, transitions, AIM support and staff breaks. Staff stated that informal meetings take place daily.
- Staff members stated that they communicate and exchange information regarding the children with parents/guardians using various methods including an electronic application in which the staff can relay messages in real time, verbally at drop off and collection times and by phone.

#### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas with a variety of resources and toys which enhanced the learning needs of children across all developmental areas.
- Equipment and materials were available from baskets on low-level shelving which promoted independence and offered choice to the children in the room.
- Children had access to age and stage appropriate chairs where they were observed sitting with their feet on the floor at the tables placed around the care room.
- The care room walls were decorated with the children's recently painted artwork such as Christmas wreaths. Photographs of the children and their families were visible in a house where the theme was all about me. These individually and personally designed activities helped to create a sense of identity and belonging for each child in the service.
- The two outdoor play areas provided alternative learning environments for the children. One of the areas was covered providing shelter in all types of weather facilitating play outdoors all year round. Each area provided a range of developmentally appropriate equipment which promoted gross motor skills from pedalling on tricycles and the kicking of balls.

- Imaginary play opportunities were available from the wooden play houses and mud kitchen while the sand area provided materials for sensory exploration and open-ended play.

### PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Ongoing observations were documented on a software package on the service's tablet which detailed the children's learning, development and interests. Lesson plans detailing fine skills to be practiced were also available which included activities such as cutting with scissors.
- Long, medium- and short-term planning was evident in the service and furnished to the inspector. Activities detailed included seasonal themes with a winter project visible on a wall in the service with associated pictures and words. Weekly nursery rhymes were evident in the coloured templates in the children's nursery rhymes folders and scrapbooks detailed projects and artwork.
- Language development was supported through one to one, group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. Examples included discussions at circle time with each child being given the opportunity to express what they were asking from Santa, singing counting songs about snowmen and Christmas songs and a story about a princess and a dinosaur, chosen by one of the children.
- Further language and literacy opportunities were provided in the form of books in the book corner which described emotions such happy, sad, angry and experiences such as a new baby and sharing.
- The children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities they wished to engage with. Examples included staff providing a variety of stimulating seasonal learning activities from which the children were observed choosing which ones they wanted to engage in.

### 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:

- Entry to the service can be gained by knocking the door. In conversation with the registered provider, it was established that parents/guardians phone ahead of time if they are picking their child up early to enable staff to open the door, therefore no unauthorised adult can gain access to the service. Exiting of the service is achieved by turning the thumb twist lock on the inside of the fire exit door, which is supervised by an adult at all times, preventing a child leaving the service unsupervised.

- Internal doors, including the staff bathroom and a separate area where the staff hang their coats, were secured to prevent the children from accessing unsafe areas.
- Window openings were inaccessible by the children, preventing the risk of any accidents occurring.
- Indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- No flexes or cables were visible in the care rooms.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a locked metal cupboard in the children's sanitary.
- The outdoor perimeter was secured with a combination of high panelling and wire fencing. The gates in the outdoor play area were secured with sliding bolts.

### Infection Control:

- Staff were observed disinfecting the tables and sweeping the floors before and after both morning and afternoon snack and after the morning session had finished. This ensured that the areas were clean and hygienic for future use.
- Hand basins in use in the service by the adults and children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, 29°C, dispensing soap, paper towels and a pedal operated bin for the disposal of paper waste.
- Cleaning schedules were observed to have been completed and were noted to be up to date.
- Children's coats were stored in the hallway on individually named hooks, and lunch bags and were stored in individually labelled cubby boxes away from the floor area.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the service's fridge, ensuring that the children's food did not spoil.

### Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original container, was available from a locked box in the service, which was inaccessible to the children.

### Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on the day of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- Both fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- Firefighting equipment was secured by brackets at the end of the cubby house unit.
- Fire escape lighting was lit eliminating any confusion in the event of an emergency.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

- (1) Contrary to the service’s nappy changing policy which stated “that nappy changing would be provided in a safe and hygienic environment” the inspector noted that the changing mat was stored on the floor in the children’s sanitary area. In conversation, the registered provider stated that they did not have a nappy changing unit and as a result children are changed on a mat on the floor, posing a potential risk.
- (2) There was a swing bin in operation in the children’s sanitary area in which a number of children were observed disposing of their used paper towels. This had the potential to be a source of cross contamination from the number of children’s hands in contact with the lid of the bin. A number of children were observed using it regularly throughout both sessions.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

### Infection Control:

- (1) A new nappy changing unit will be fitted in the children’s sanitary area, this will be a permanent fixture for children requiring nappy changing in the future.
- (2) The swing bin in the children’s sanitary area was removed and replaced with a pedal operated bin. All future bins will be pedal operated.

### Supporting documentation submitted

### Infection Control:

- (1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
- (2) A photograph of the new pedal operated bin in the children’s sanitary area was received in the office of the inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

### 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) Certificates were on file to evidence that two staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR) and two staff member had paediatric first aid training completed. The staff roster indicated that all four staff members were available while the pre-school children were present in the service.

(2)

(a) (b) The large, well-stocked, first aid box was located in the care room within easy reach of the adults and was available at all times.

### 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(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) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as 13 November 2024.

(b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated 8 August 2024, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 8 October 2024.

(2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

(4) The fire procedures were displayed on the inside of the fire door of the outside play area.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished to the inspector which included the following details;

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 22
- The type of service: Sessional
- Expiry date: 27 March 2025.