

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC269
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Miss Ellie's Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	28 Copperalley Close, Youghal, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 C603
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eleanor Ahern
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	06/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	N/A
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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>	D Prendergast
<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

Miss Ellie's Playschool is a privately owned sessional service, which caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is provided over 38 weeks annually. Registered daily opening hours are from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday through to Friday. Situated in Youghal in Co Cork, the service operates from a room within the registered provider's private residence. Adjoining children's sanitary facilities are available and the outdoor play space is directly accessible from the care room.

### Staffing

There are currently three adults employed at the setting, including the registered provider. A relief staff member is also available. All four of the adults have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

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.

## 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) The person in charge of the service was the registered provider, who had also nominated a designated deputy, to deputise in her absence.
- (b) Upon the inspector's arrival, the registered provider was available at the service and remained to facilitate the inspection process. The deputy attended briefly to assist with the requested paperwork. Further examination of the staff attendance records demonstrated that either the registered provider or the deputy was present on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2) (a) (b) (d) & (4)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Therefore, parts (2) (a) (b) (d) and (4) were not assessed, as these were reviewed at the time of the previous inspection. However, Garda vetting for one staff member, whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal, was requested for review.

- (c) Garda vetting in respect of one adult had been renewed. This was in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

### 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) During the onsite inspection, it was observed that a sufficient number of adults were involved in the direct care of the children.
- (3) The adult child ratio was correct and maintained; there were 2 adults responsible for the direct care and education of 14 children, who were aged 3 to 4 ½ years. In addition, the deputy was available for a short period at the beginning of the inspection.

### 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider advised that a total of 16 children were enrolled at the service. A sample of 10 child record forms were assessed and included the required information, as listed from (a) to (i).

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

### Compliance Information

(1)  
(h) A sample review of 4 weeks attendance records, from 8 September 2025 to 3 October 2025, demonstrated compliance.

### 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)

#### Programme of activities:

- The inspector was advised by the registered provider that the service provided a play based, child led curriculum.
- Written information in relation to the programme of activities was available for review. This was noted to include monthly themes, such as settling in, kindness and community and it set out corresponding areas of child development and exploration. Links to Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework and Síolta, the national quality framework for early childhood education, were also listed.

- The children were encouraged to read books as part of the daily routine, which supported language development. It was also observed that conversation was actively promoted during snack time, as the children sat and ate together.
- During free play, the children engaged in imaginary play, construction play and participated in table top activities such as jigsaw making and working with peg boards. Time in the outdoor play area was also facilitated, which allowed for more active play and movement.
- Children were offered choice within the daily routine. For example, towards the end of free play time, the children were asked if they wished to tidy up and prepare for lunch, or, if they would prefer to continue playing. The children's collective decision to extend free play was subsequently supported by the adults.

### 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 available tables and chairs were observed to be suited to the age and stage of development of the children in attendance and were in plentiful supply.
- Each child was allocated an individually labelled container for storing their bags and personal belongings. These were positioned within easy reach, at the children's eye level.
- The equipment and toys were located on low-level shelving, which allowed for easy access, choice and independence. Materials on offer included a large furnished dolls house, a car garage and handheld vehicles, a farm set, play kitchens and utensils, books, dolls, plastic bricks, connectable shapes and jigsaws.
- Outdoors, the children had the use of ride on toys, a mud kitchen, a slide, cones and activity trays. The registered provider advised that additional materials, such as waffle shapes and plastic bricks, were also brought outdoors during 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

- A healthy eating policy was in place at the setting.
- Snacks were supplied by the children’s parents or guardians. The range of foods available for the mid-morning meal break included sandwiches, crackers, noodles, yogurts and a variety of fruit, with water to drink.
- The registered provider advised the inspector that none of the children had any specific dietary requirements or food allergies.
- During conversation, it was confirmed that if any of the children became hungry outside of designated mealtimes, they could choose a snack from their lunchbox.

### 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 service’s designated outdoor play space was enclosed by a combination of walls and an entrance gate.
- The door that led from the care room to the private residence was secured with a keypad.
- Blind cords were anchored with appropriate safety clips.
- Wall mounted storage was provided for firefighting equipment.
- Cleaning agents were stored on a high-level shelf, which was inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children’s reach.

##### Infection control:

- Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available, including warm running water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and a foot pedal operated bin. The children were noted to wash their hands before the mid-morning snack.

- Refrigerated storage was ensured for the children's perishable snacks.
- The premises appeared clean and well maintained. Cleaning tasks, such as sweeping the floor and sanitising the tables, were observed to be undertaken by staff members.
- The care room was supplied with fresh air, through open windows.

### Fire safety:

- The service's fire exit was clear and free from obstruction.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

## 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 service provided evidence that two adults held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and that at least one of these adults was always on the premises during operational hours.
- (2)
- (a) A wall mounted first aid cabinet was used to store the first aid supplies.
  - (b) The first aid supplies were available to the children at all times, should treatment be required.