

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC385
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Step by Step Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Parochial House, Rockchapel, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 TY38
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Kate Kelly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part-time
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	06/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	6
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Co. Cork.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Collins
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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### 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

Step by Step pre-school is located in the old parochial house in the village of Rockchapel in North Cork. The service operates as a part-time day care service from 09.00-13.30 daily and facilitates a sessional service between the hours of 09.00 and 12.00 daily, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

The service caters for children aged between 2 ½ and 6 years.

The pre-school premises is on the same site as the parish church but is a separate building.

The premises is two story with one care room on the ground floor and one on the first floor. Downstairs, there are children's toilets and a kitchenette. Upstairs there is a children's toilet and an adult toilet and space for storage.

The outdoor play facility to the right of the building is secured by fencing, a wall and an access gate. The second space used is a large tarmacadam area to the rear of the church where the children use ride on bikes, tricycles, scooters and tractors.

There is adequate parking at the side of the church which allows for the safe drop off and collection of children.

### Staffing

There were 4 staff working in the service and on the day of inspection and additional adult attending on work placement.

The four staff working in the service were qualified at level 6 to level 8 on the national qualifications framework and one of the staff of the service had completed the (LINC) Leadership for Inclusion programme to promote inclusion for all children in the service.

### 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, deputy 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,*

*(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) The registered provider has ensured that:

- (a) A person is named as the person in charge. In this service the registered provider is named as the person in charge, a further staff member is named as the deputy person in charge.
- (b) There is a person in charge or a named deputy on the premises at all times.

(2) Staff files in relation to each of the five adults working in the service were reviewed.

- (a) Eight of the 10 written and validated references required were on file from past employers.
  - (c) Records on file demonstrated that each of the five adults that work in the service and have access to children had been Garda vetted.
  - (d) Police vetting was required for two adults that work in the service and appropriate vetting was on file for both adults.
- (4) Each of the four adults employed and working directly with the children held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a)/(b) Two written and validated references were not on file for an adult working in the service that had access to children. Not appropriately vetting staff prior to them commencing working with children may allow adult who may not be appropriate have access to children.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (a) Two references that were required have been received, both references have been received from previous employers and have been validated. The registered provider has committed to ensuring all staff and students will have references on file prior to commencing in the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) (a) Two written and validated references have been received.

### Summary Comment

Following receipt of the references required and the assurances received from the registered provider the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## 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 have been reviewed and were in keeping with good practice:

- The infection control policy.
- The inclusion policy.

## 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children*

*applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were four staff working directly with the 20 children attending the service during the morning session.

One of these staff were employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. The registered provider was one of the four staff working.

The children were cared for in two separate rooms. Three staff were working directly with the 11 children attending the Junior pre-school room downstairs during the sessional hours. The adult on work placement was also working in this room on a supernumerary basis.

There was one staff member working directly with the nine children in the Senior pre-school room upstairs during the morning session.

During the operation of the part-time service, 12.00-13.30 there were two staff caring for the six children who remained on for part-time care, these children were cared for downstairs.

(4) The registered provider ensured that the adult child ratio for the:

(a) Sessional service was correct with four adults caring for 20 children aged 2-4 years.

(b) For the part-time service two adults cared for the six children remaining in the service for part-time care.

### 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) There were 20 children in attendance between the two care rooms on the morning of the inspection. Of the 20 files available 14 files were assessed for completeness, a sample taken from the children attending both rooms. The following sections were complete on all enrolment forms, (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) & (i) as indicated above.

(3) (c) The records as identified above were available for inspection in the service to the inspector.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) One of the fourteen forms did not have the child's date of birth recorded.

(b) No file had a record of when the child commenced in the service.

Not having up to date and complete records for children attending may impede appropriate care being given to them.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (a) All registration forms have been updated to include the date of birth of each child.

(b) The forms have all been updated to include the commencement date of each child.

The registered provider has committed that each enrolment form will be checked prior to each child starting in the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The corrective and preventive action form and the assurances received is accepted as evidence these forms are now complete.

## Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## 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**

- The children in each of the care rooms were helped with their snacks as required and each group ate in an unhurried environment. The children that remained on for the part-time service ate together in the afternoon.

- The water bottles for each child was easily accessible throughout the day and the bottles were stored in an area known to the children, it was observed that the drinks for the senior pre-school children were brought outside when the children were taken outside to play.
- The children used the toilet when needed and the children who needed assistance were helped and reminded to wash their hands.
- Children dressed in appropriate clothing of coats and hats when going outside to play, the day of inspection was wet and cold but the children got access to outdoor play.
- The children attending both rooms had a rest area in a small space under the stairs for the downstairs room and in a side cubby style area in the upstairs room. Access to these rest areas allowed the children opt out of activities and to rest when they chose to do same.
- The child who required an individual care plan did not have same as developed in conjunction with the Better Start team but the staff caring for the child in question were aware of their requirements and were able to support them in their additional needs, the inclusion policy outlined best practice when including children in the service.
- When a child was observed to require a change of clothing, this was done by the staff in a supportive way which promoted the dignity of the child in question.

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

- Mealtime was sociable with the staff in both rooms sitting with and conversing with the children creating a sociable environment.
- The staff caring for the children created a supportive environment, assisting each child as required with snacks/lunch, colouring or other activities such as building blocks, reading a book and when playing outside.
- Communication with parents/guardians was at drop off and collection.
- Transitions were managed by the staff giving adequate notice of changes and clean up songs sang; this assisted the children when transitioning from play time to snack/lunch time and when going outside or going home.

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

- Both playrooms had appropriate height tables and chairs.
- Sensory play was developed through playing with sand outside and was available but was not used on the day of inspection.

- Fine motor development was encouraged through the use of threading boards, share sorters and with the use of blocks and bricks suitable for the different age groups.
- Gross motor development was evidenced outside with children on balance bicycles, ride on toys, and balls were observed to be played with on the hard tarmacadam surface where the children ran and played freely.
- Imaginary play was developed through room layout in home, garage, dress up and shop areas.

### PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

- The plan for each day was similar with accessing the outdoor space as part of each day after snack time and before going home.
- All children were noted to have the opportunity to learn through play for example: the children's physical and gross motor development was enhanced through outdoor play.
- Speech and language development was through conversation, rhymes and storytelling.
- A routine was followed and the children were aware of this and seemed happy when moving and when activities were changed.
- Two children from the senior pre-school room upstairs were cared for and played downstairs weekly and the children were happy to 'help' downstairs but joined their own group for circle time and for snack time. The whole service played outside together.

### OUTDOOR AREA:

The outdoor area was laid out in two distinct areas.

- The first area adjacent to the premises was covered with artificial grass, had a tunnel to climb through, a sand pit and a sand tray, a slide and swing and a playhouse. This area was not used on the day of inspection as the children chose to play with the larger equipment available at the other side.
- The second area was at the rear of the church and was a tarmacadam area that was secured to one side and staff supervising the other side to ensure no child could gain access to the carpark or the road. This area was used for bicycles, scooters, ride on toys and had a goal for use when playing ball promoting gross motor development.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### BASIC NEEDS

- The temperatures in the care rooms were recorded at 16.3 and 14.9°C in the junior pre-school room and senior pre-school room respectively. These temperatures below the recommended 18-22°C do not support the children to be able to work and play in comfort.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- The timer for the heating has been adjusted to start earlier. The owner of the premises has also stated that the owner of the building is to commence the process of insulating the walls and the attic of the service to increase the heat retention. The registered provider has committed to ensuring the heating is turned on after holidays to increase the heating within the building.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the time with extended heating times have been received.

### Summary Comment

Following the assurances received from the registered provider the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## 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

The children's snacks and lunches were provided by parents/guardians.

Snack was served at 10.30 and lunch was served at 12.50 on the day of inspection. The food observed for both snack and lunch were observed to be healthy and nutritious and contained the essential foods required.

## 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 entrance to the service was secured. The gates were secured with running bolts on the inside. These measures ensured that no child could gain unauthorised access to the outside carpark. The external doors of the service were secured with thumb turn locks.
- The outdoor area was secure, the artificial grass was intact with no trip hazard identified. The tarmacadam area was used when there were adequate staff to ensure the area was supervised as there was no barrier to the children leaving the area.
- Storage was out of reach of the children.
- The hot water in the sinks in both children's toilets upstairs and downstairs was adequately warm and not too hot to ensure good hand hygiene but to avoid a scald injury to a child.
- The window openings were out of the reach of the children.
- The hot drinks consumed were contained in a lidded insulated mug which ensured the safety of the children.
- All toys were in good condition with no pinch or crush points noted.
- Cleaning and disinfection products were stored on a high shelf and out of reach of the children.
- No loose or exposed electric cables were evident in the care rooms.

### Infection Control:

The service followed best practice guidelines in the management of the spread of infection for the following:

- The tables were cleaned before and after snack time with a cleaning product suitable for use with children.
- There was hot water available in the children's and adult toilets. Liquid soap and paper towels were available at all sinks to ensure the children and staff could wash their hands as required.
- The children's snacks from both care rooms were stored in a fridge to prevent contamination and potential illness from perishable items contained in the snacks.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack time, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were available at each sink for the appropriate disposal of contaminated waste.

### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered in the service.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children as reported by the registered provider do not require sleep, beds had been placed in the quiet area and they were played with and not used therefore no sleep checks were available for assessment.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire extinguishers were not accessible to the children and were secured to the wall.
- The fire exit doors were secured with thumb turn locks.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The radiator surface temperatures were high throughout the building, the following radiators had a surface temperature of above 50°C, the radiator to the rear of the downstairs room was recorded at 55.5°C, the radiator to the right of the upstairs room was recorded at 58.7°C and to the left of the upstairs room was recorded at 54.8°C. Surface temperatures that are not controlled and reach temperatures above 50°C can potentially cause a contact burn to a child.

#### Infection Control:

2. The adult toilet was not secured from use by the children as no external lock was on the door and the staff toilet was located beside the children's toilet upstairs. Not securing the staff toilet away from the toilets used by the children may pose a risk of cross infection.
3. The children who remained in the service for part-time care were not observed to wash their hands before their main meal. Not ensuring hands are washed after playing with toys and equipment which the children share, poses a risk of contamination and cross infection, which was not in keeping with the infection control policy.

#### Fire Safety:

4. The gate outside the main door that was secured with a lock that required a key to open was locked throughout the running of the sessional service, this was the evacuation route as identified on the fire evacuation plan. Having this gate locked would have prevented the staff and children being able to safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire or other emergency.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The radiator temperatures have been reduced and will be maintained at the reduced temperature, the running of the heating has been extended.

#### Infection Control:

2. The adult toilet has been secured by a running bolt and prevents access to the toilet by the children.
3. The registered provider has stated children will wash their hands at the following times:
  - before snack time (10.30am)

- when re-entering the preschool after being outdoors
- before second snack time (12.50pm) and
- always after using the toilet

### Fire Safety:

4. The outside gate will be unlocked during the operation of the service with the exception of when the children are using the upper outdoor play area (Safety). A designated person has been assigned responsibility for ensuring the gate is appropriately locked.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the radiator thermostats has been received.

#### Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the running bolt on the staff toilet door has been received.
3. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form are accepted as evidence.

#### Fire Safety:

4. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form are accepted as evidence

### Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive action form and the assurances received the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

- (3) (a) The registered provider ensured that the visitors to the service were signed in.
- (b) A record of these were available for inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The daily attendance for the children was not recorded on the day of inspection. A new system was to be developed to ensure an accurate reflection of who was attending in each room daily, however in the interim no sign in/out for the children was available. Not signing in the children daily does not allow for accurate records to be kept and assessment for adult child ratios etc into the future and may pose a risk to ensuring all children have been evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergency.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The new recording system has been developed and implemented to ensure an accurate reflection of the children in attendance daily.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) Photographic evidence of the attendance of each child for a week has been received.

### Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence submitted the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## 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) Records available indicated that two staff had up to date first aid responder training. Both staff worked the part-time hours, this ensured that the children attending the service had a person trained in first aid immediately available to them at all times.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that there was suitably equipped first aid supplies:
  - (a) Stored on the high shelf downstairs and
  - (b) Was available to the children 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 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) The last fire drill was completed on 20.10.2023, evidence was available to indicate that monthly fire drills had been completed in this and the last academic year.
  - (b) The service records for the firefighting equipment indicated the equipment was serviced in February 2023. The service record for the smoke detection equipment (Alarm) indicated the smoke detectors were last serviced on 16.06.2023.
- (2) (c) The records as above were open for inspection by the inspector.
- (4) The notice for the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency was displayed in the service at the front door.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Compliance Information

The services insurance record stated the service was insured for 28 children to attend at any one time and to operate as a part-time service. The insurance is in date until 27.03.2024.