

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC437
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tír na nÓg Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Family Resource Centre, Blackwater Heights, Youghal, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 YE98
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eileen Kenefick, Margaret Crowley
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	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 T23X440
<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).

Conditions if applicable

N/A

### Description of service

This privately owned, early years service is registered to offer sessional care and education to children aged two to six years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 8.45am to 11.45am and from 9.15am to 12.15pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year.

Located in a residential area of Youghal in Co Cork, the service operates from a family resource centre. There are two operational care rooms within the single storey, detached building. Children's sanitary facilities are available adjoining each care room and a staff sanitary facility is provided adjacent to the rooms. The children have the use of a spacious outdoor play area, at the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

At present, there are seven adults employed at the setting and all seven are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes both registered providers, two relief staff and two adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. Each of the seven 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 providers, 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) Both registered providers were in charge of operating the early years service. A named deputy had also been nominated, to deputise in the event of their absence.
  - (b) The registered providers were present for the duration of the unannounced inspection.
  - (c) A written record entitled staff roles, was presented for review. This document clearly outlined the names of all seven staff members and their respective roles. It was also found to be in keeping with the verbal information which had been provided by the registered provider, during the opening meeting.
- (2) Recruitment records for the seven adults attached to the setting were reviewed and the following information was noted:

- (a) A total of 14 written and validated references were required. Five were on file from past employers.
- (b) Nine of the references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for three of the adults and copies of the relevant documents were maintained.
- (4) The seven staff who worked directly with the children had each attained a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of the corresponding documentation was held on file, or displayed at the service.

### 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) Throughout the period of inspection, it was noted that an adequate number of adults worked with the children who attended the service.
- (3) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.  
The rooms were in operation as follows:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Ladybird room (3 - 5 years)	12	2 + 1 AIM support
Busy Bee room (3 – 4 ½ years )	10	1 + 1 AIM support

### 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:

- On the day of inspection, a fruit snack was observed at 9.45am in the Ladybird room and this was followed by the mid-morning snack, which took place shortly before 11.00am. During this time, the adults promptly assisted the children who required help with opening packaging and containers. A relaxed atmosphere was noted, as the adults sat with and chatted warmly to the children.
- In both care rooms, the children's drinks were available to them on a low-level shelf. Extra bottled water was stored in the fridge.
- The children's sanitary facilities were located adjoining their respective care rooms, which ensured ease of access and in turn, promoted the development of independence and self-care skills. Staff were observed to supervise the children during handwashing routines and offered verbal reminders. It was also noted that children were asked if they needed to use the toilet facility, before going to the outdoor play area.
- The available space within the care rooms sufficiently met the children's need to move freely as they engaged with play resources and participated in routine tasks. Outdoor play and activities were also accommodated for both groups of children.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults interacted with the children in a patient and encouraging manner and acknowledged their interest in various materials, during play and exploration.
- An inclusive, respectful environment was evident during both structured and free play activities. For example, turn taking was promoted and children were encouraged to contribute to discussion topics, such as their favourite foods.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(b) Cosy areas were available in each care room, which supported the children’s need to relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary. These spaces consisted of vinyl L-shaped sofas, positioned next to well-stocked bookshelves.

### 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:

- Upon arrival, the prevention of unauthorised access was observed to be ensured; the main door was secured, with a buzzer entry system in place. Both care room doors were fitted with high-level door handles, which were closed when not in use. This practice minimised the risk of a child exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor play environment was enclosed by a combination of fencing, walls and gates.
- A shock absorbing surface was available underneath outdoor play equipment, such as climbing frames, slides and seesaws.
- Soft padding was provided around a support beam, in the sheltered outdoor area. This reduced the risk of injury to a child.
- Visibility strips were in place on the glass panel doors in the Ladybird room.
- Radiator surface temperatures were maintained below 50°C, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a burn injury; temperature readings of 33.5°C and 32.5°C were noted.

- High-level storage was ensured for cleaning agents.
- Fire extinguishers were securely wall mounted.

### Infection control:

- Dispensers of liquid soap and paper towels were easily accessible at the wash hand basins within the service. The children were observed to wash their hands after returning from outdoor play. Warm running water was also available to support this practice.
- Foot pedal operated bins were in use in the sanitary areas.
- Perishable foods, such as yogurts, were stored in a refrigerator prior to snack time. This reduced the risk of food spoilage.
- A combination of shelf storage and wall hooks were provided to store the children's coats and bags.
- Cleaning was observed in the Busy Bee room, after the children had been collected. For example, surfaces were sanitised and floors were mopped.
- Open windows in both care rooms provided the indoor spaces with a supply of natural ventilation.

### Administration of medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to a child during the inspection.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children were in receipt of medication at the time of inspection.

### Fire safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted during the inspection.
- Signposted fire exits were illuminated and were maintained free form obstruction.

### 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 providers had ensured that a person with up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training, was available to the children throughout the hours of operation. The certification presented for examination indicated that four of the adults had completed this training.
- (2)
- (a) In both care rooms, a first aid cabinet was accessible to the adults. Outdoor first aid kits were also in use.
  - (b) The first aid supplies were readily 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 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) Monthly fire drill records were presented for review. The most recent fire drill was noted to have taken place on 6 December 2024.
  - (b) The service had a list of the number and type of the available firefighting equipment. Maintenance records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 30 August 2024 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 23 September 2024.
- (4) Notices, which outlined the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, were displayed in each of the care rooms and in the entrance area.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate detailed cover for up to 29 children to attend the sessional service at any one time. The insurance policy was valid from 28 March 2024 until 27 March 2025.