

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC461
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Name of Service:	Wee Wisdom Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ballinraha, Glanworth, Fermoy, Co. Cork
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Burke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/04/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Wee Wisdom Pre-school is a private sessional early years' service accommodating children aged from 2 years to 6 years of age. The service is registered to provide two sessional services from 9.15 am to 12.15 pm and 12.30 pm until 3.30 pm, currently only the morning session is in operation and the service is open Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is located in a rural area outside the village of Glanworth in North Cork. The single storey building adjoins the registered providers home and consists of three care rooms, four children's toilets, one adult toilet and a storage room. There is a large outdoor play area and ample car parking is available at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are six staff members including the registered provider employed in the service. In addition, on the day of inspection there was a student on placement from a third level institution.

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 inspections 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named person was available to deputise.
 - (b) The registered provider and the deputy were available for the period of the time the pre-school children were present in the service, and the staff signing in record was available to evidence these details.
 - (c) Staff members were aware of the management structure and the associated roles and responsibilities of each person.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that three staff members had been employed since the last inspection on 5 October 2021. In addition, a third level student was on placement of the day of inspection. Therefore, recruitment records in regards to these adults were reviewed.

- (a) (b) There were five references and validations from past employers and three references and validations from sources other than past employers.
- (c) There were four Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau available on file in respect of the four adults.
- (d) Documentation in each file indicated that international police vetting was not required for the four adults.
- (4) The three adults, who worked directly with the children, each held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was met. There were twenty-nine children in attendance with four adults, the registered provider and one student.

Room 3 (2 years 6 months – 4 years)

There were nine children in attendance with one adult.

Room 2 (3 years – 5 years)

There were seven children in attendance with one adult and one student.

Room 1 (3 years – 5 years)

There were thirteen children in attendance with two adults.

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:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent.

Compliance Information

(j) Signed medical consent was documented on an emergency care plan which had been completed by parents in the event of a medical emergency related to an existing medical condition. Staff stated that they had been trained in how to administer the medication and a certificate was furnished to the inspector confirming same. The expiry date was recorded as 11 January 2024.

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 were observed putting on their coats and boots to go outdoors and one adult was observed supporting a child in Room 3 who was having difficulty putting on their boots.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- During mid-morning snack the adults sat with the children at the tables engaging in social conversation which helped to promote a relaxed, happy atmosphere.
- The adults working in Room 3 supported children to engage positively with one another and were heard reminding the children to use "Gentle hands in school" when two children were experiencing difficulties in sharing play equipment.

- Staff stated that they communicate with parents/guardians at drop off and collection, by email and by putting letters into the children’s bags informing parents/guardians of current events and exchanging information.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Each room was divided into clearly defined areas which provided opportunities to enhance the children’s learning needs across all areas of development. There were home corners, small world figures and animals promoting imaginary play, puzzles and construction encouraging cognitive development and arts and crafts for creativity.
- Room 3 had a range of play-based materials and a selection of Montessori equipment that offered stimulation and exploration. These were positioned on low-level shelves which promoted choice and independence.
- The walls of the rooms were decorated with the children’s artwork including colourfully painted butterflies, birthday walls with each child’s painted handprint and birth date and family photographs.
- There was a wide variety of developmentally appropriate outdoor play equipment provided in the fully secured outdoor play area. Opportunities were provided for challenge and risky play for example, the children were observed engaged in running around the grass area which contained purposefully designed mounds and tunnels which the children could go through and over. A variety of bicycles, scooters and ride-ons were in use providing opportunities for gross motor skills, a pirate sand box in which the children were actively involved in digging and carrying sand for sensory play while other children were climbing on a frame and sliding down a slide. Staff were on hand to provide support and assistance when required.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Ongoing observations linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, and progress reports were furnished to the inspector. Staff in Room 2 stated that key workers are responsible for completing these documents which and then shared with parents at the end of the year. Children’s artwork and photographs of activities were also available in scrapbooks. The current theme was life cycles of different animals including butterflies.
- Children’s language development was supported through one to one/group discussions and storytelling. The children in Room 3 were heard being read the story of “The Jelly Bean Tree” and were actively asking questions which were answered by the staff member.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

1. There were no rest/quiet areas available in the three care rooms for children to sit quietly away from active, noisy or busy areas. In conversation with the registered provider, it was acknowledged that there were no rest areas currently available and that this was an ongoing issue. This was also highlighted in the last inspection report from 5 October 2021 where the manager had stated that the areas had been refurbished with couches and seating, this was not observed on inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was made by the registered provider:

1. New seating will be in place for the new term in September 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A photograph of the proposed soft furnishing for the rest/quiet areas in the care rooms was submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this Regulation has 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

- Children in Room 3 were observed eating healthy and nutritious food for mid-morning snack which had been supplied by the parents. The food was noted to consist of filled sandwiches, yogurt, pretzels, crackers and fresh fruit.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Two children were observed eating chocolate cookies and sponge biscuits with orange jam and chocolate in Room 1 which did not conform with the service's healthy eating policy on healthy snacks. In conversation staff stated that the parents have been informed and given the healthy eating policy however it still remains an issue. Staff also stated that the children are offered alternative food, however this was not observed on inspection. It is recommended that foods high in fat, sugar and salt should only be eaten in moderation.
- (2) Drinking water was not freely available throughout the day. The children were observed taking their water

bottles from their lunch bags at snack time and returning them after snack time. In conversation staff from Rooms 1 & 2 stated that the children's water bottles stay in their bags throughout the morning other than when in use at snack time

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were made by the registered provider:

- (1) Parents have been reminded of the healthy eating policy and informed that food that does not align with the healthy eating policy will be returned, and the child will be offered an alternative.
- (2) The children's water bottles are now available in the care rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A copy of a letter sent to the parents regarding healthy eating was received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (2) A photograph of the children's water bottles available on the window shelf was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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:

- Front door glass panels were identified with a lattice design to prevent the children banging into them.
- Windows in the care rooms at the children's level had all been fitted with restrictors to prevent accidents occurring.
- Blind cords were secured out of reach of children.
- All indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Heavy equipment had been anchored securely to the walls in each care room
- Flexes and cords were stored out of reach of the children.
- All indoor waste was stored in pedal operated bins.
- Cleaning agents were stored in locked containers out of reach of the children.
- The septic tank and water pool were secured with wooden fencing and were inaccessible to the children.

- The shower area in the children’s sanitary area had been cordoned off and was not in use.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, dispensing soap and disposable paper hand towels. Thermostatically controlled warm water, averaging 36°C, was available for use by the children to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Tables and work tops were cleaned with disinfectant spray after food and the floors were swept.
- Care room 3 was observed to be well ventilated with the windows open while maintaining room temperature.
- Children’s outdoor boots were observed being stored in a storage box off the main floor area.
- Perishable food was observed being stored safely in the fridge in Room 3, preventing the food from spoiling.

Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was clearly visible in the car park area and was located a suitable distance from the service.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that the children are taken on one outing a year.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) One of the children in Room 2 was observed eating full grapes, when brought to the attention of the staff member this was subsequently addressed. In conversation with the staff member it was stated that the parents have been informed regarding the importance of cutting fruit into bite size pieces. However, the child still brings in full grapes, which poses a safety risk for the child from choking.

Administration of Medication:

- (2) There was no anti-febrile medication available, posing a safety issue in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

- (3) The push bar fire exit door in care room 1 and the main fire exit door leading to the fire assembly area in care room 3 were fitted with key locks;- which were in operation while the children were in the early years service, posing a safety risk should the keys be mislaid or misplaced.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were submitted by the registered provider:

General Safety:

- (1) Parents were informed of the importance of cutting grapes and staff will check the lunch boxes before the children begin snack.

Administration of Medication:

- (2) Anti-febrile medication has been purchased.

Fire Safety:

- (3) The keys have been removed from the door and will not be in use.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) The statement from the registered provider that the parents have been informed of the importance of cutting grapes and that staff will check lunch boxes has been accepted.

Administration of Medication:

- (2) A photograph of the anti-febrile medication was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Fire Safety:

- (3) A photograph of the keys removed from the fire exit door was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

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) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff members available at all times who held a certificate or proof of training in First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The expiry dates were recorded as 3 May 2023 and 22 April 2024 respectively.

(2)

(a) (b) The two first aid kits were stored in a visible position that was easily accessible and were 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)

(b) Written records detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Both certificates were dated 26 January 2023.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were located at the fire exit doors.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Fire drill records were not up to date, with the last recorded drill taking place on 23 January 2023. This issue was highlighted in the last inspection report from 5 October 2021 where the manager had stated that monthly fire drills were now being recorded; this practice was not observed on inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) Two fire drills have been carried out, 28 April 2023 and 15 May 2023, since the last inspection on 26 April 2023. Fire drills will be conducted and recorded on a monthly basis going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (a) Copies of two fire drills conducted on 28 April and 15 May 2023 were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this Regulation has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- Children engaging in risky play in the outdoor areas were supervised appropriately by the adults in these areas.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Lack of supervision, with regards to hygienic hand washing in the sanitary area, was observed by the inspector on two separate occasions throughout the morning. Two children were observed leaving the area without washing their hands. There were no staff present at the time and the sanitary area was located in the corridor outside the care room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) Children will be supervised while washing their hands in the sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) The statement from the registered provider that children will be supervised while washing their hands has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this Regulation has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A valid insurance policy with an expiry date of 27 March 2024 was available on file. The policy stated that the service is insured to have 40 sessional children. Details within the policy covered items such as public liability, fire and theft and outings.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The registered provider confirmed that they were not aware of any concerns with regard to the structural soundness of the building.
- (b) The service had its own entrance separate to the registered provider's home. This was secured upon arrival ensuring that no unauthorised adult could gain entry. The door contained a latch inside, which was out of reach of the children ensuring that children could not leave the service unsupervised. The outdoor perimeter was secured with wooden panelling and high metal fencing.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
- (1) The temperature in the children's sanitary area, where three of the four children's toilets were located, was recorded at 16 °C. While there was a radiator in the area this was not producing any heat. Room temperatures for children should be between 18°C and 22°C
- (d)
- (2) The air vent in the additional children's toilet, located in the hallway, was filled with dust impeding the circulation of clean air.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c)
- (1) The radiator in the children's main toilet area has been switched on and a record of the room temperature was recorded.
- (d)
- (2) The air vent in the children's toilet has been cleaned.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (c)
- (1) A copy of the recording of the room temperature of 19.3 °C was received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (d)
- (2) A photograph of the clean air vent was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.