

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE023
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Name of Service:	Wonder Years Creche
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Address of Service:	Drumquin, Ballynacally, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 VK25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anna Hehir
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy
Title:	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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Wonder Years Creche was established in 1994, in Ballynacally, Ennis, County Clare. The service is located in a single storey building adjacent to the owner's residence. Enclosed outdoor play areas are located to the front, side and rear of the building. The programme of care and education is facilitated Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00 on a full day, part-time or sessional basis for children ranging in age from six months to six years.

Staffing

Eight adults are employed by the service. On the 18 November 2024, the service manager assisted by seven adults cared for the children in attendance. The registered provider is the owner of the service and does not work in the service. The adults held evidence of engagement in continuous professional development.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1), (2)(a)(b).

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4).

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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. 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, 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, 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 manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Nine files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Thirteen written and validated written references from past employers were available.

(b)

Five written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of nine adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of one adult working in the service who had lived in another state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Eight adults working directly with the children and the registered provider held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(2)

On the 18 November 2024, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the care rooms. Six adults cared for the twenty-seven children attending the service in the morning and six adults cared for twenty-five children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

During the inspection more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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)

The children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to age and level of development of the children:

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults cared for the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The children were treated in a sensitive manner, soft tones of voice were used and the children’s needs were responded to promptly. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The children were supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The transitions in the children’s activities were completed with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably with their peers and the adult. The parents/guardians provided the children’s food. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The transitions in activities were completed in a calm manner and the children were notified in advance of these changes.

Physical and Material Environment:

Three care rooms were in operation during the inspection. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging activities and were observed to be fully engaged in the play-based programme. The care rooms were well-resourced and were laid out for the children to readily access the equipment and materials. Numerical and alphabetical learning aids and creative work were displayed on the walls in the care rooms. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care rooms were appropriately resourced with, pretend wooden kitchens, a dress up area and an area for the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children. The outdoor play areas were located to the front, side and rear of the service. These areas had natural grass and synthetic surface. The children had access ride on vehicles, scooters, bikes, a slide, sand and water play areas, activity centres, a mud kitchen and a chalk wall. Plastic boxes were available with blocks, dolls and transport vehicles. An area was available for the children to plant vegetables and flowers.

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:

- A bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing, concrete walls and gates to protect the children within and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- A sign in book was available to record people entering the premises.
- The children arrival and departure from the service was recorded in a written record.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured on the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Child friendly handwashing posters were located above the wash hand basins as prompters to promote good handwashing practices.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- The nappy changing procedures were completed in accordance with the service's infection control procedure. A procedure was displayed in the nappy changing facilities.
- The children's perishable food items and infant formula were stored correctly in fridges in the care rooms.
- An appropriate method was available to sterilise the infant's soothers. The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- Labelled containers were available for storing the children's bedlinen and personal belongings.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The adults demonstrated a good knowledge of administering medication.
- Documentation was available should medication be required.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room accommodated six standard sized cots for the babies to sleep.

- The sleep room and care room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 °Celsius in the areas where children sleep. A thermometer was available for staff to measure and monitor the room temperatures.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.
- The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

Fire Safety:

- Two adults held records of up-to-date fire safety training.
- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exits routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- The manager confirmed that outings are not conducted by the service.

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)

An adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service The last fire drill took place on the 13 November 2024.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place on the 09 October 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for forty children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.