

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE050
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Forever Friends Preschool
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	St Joseph's National School, Quartermire, Milltown Malbay, Milltown Malbay, Co. Clare
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	V95 H7K6
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Kate Looney
-------------------------------------	-------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	14/06/2023
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Forever Friends Preschool is a privately operated, sessional preschool service, operating from St. Joseph's National School in Miltown Malbay, County Clare. The service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education programme Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:30 for thirty-eight weeks of the year. The service facilitates the programme of care and learning in an indoor and outdoor classroom. Sanitary facilities are located next to the preschool room. The outdoor area is located adjacent to the building.

Staffing

On the 14th of June 2023 the registered provider and three members of staff worked directly with the children. The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the service. Two relief persons are available to provide cover. The members of staff have obtained a major award on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Records were available of the staff members engagement in continuing 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 9, 11, 19,23, 25, 26 and 28. 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named staff member is available to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.

Six files were available in respect of the registered provider, three members of staff, and two relief persons. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Seven validated references were available from past employers.

(b)

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

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider, the three members of staff and the two relief persons.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of one adult who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The staff employed by the service held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service at all times.
- (3)
On the 14th of June 2023 the ratio of adults caring for the children was maintained at all times. The registered provider and three members of staff worked directly with the twelve children throughout the inspection.
- (8)(c)
Not applicable, as the service is not operated single-handedly.

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)
Twenty-one completed forms were available for the number of children enrolled in the service. These forms were reviewed and detailed the required particulars outlined in (1) (a)-(i).

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 inspector observed the children's learning, development and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff demonstrated respect and warmth towards the children in their care using soft, gentle tones of voice, positive language and offered praise and encouragement consistently. Positive behavioural strategies were used during all individual and group interactions. All the adults and children have trained in sign language to support their peer's communication skills and in order to integrate all children attending the service.

The children were told in advance of changes in activities and learning and the transitions in the programme were completed with ease. Children were encouraged to be independent with their personal belongings, while having their lunches and drinks and while using the toilet. The children's individual cues for assistance were responded to promptly and in a sensitive manner. The staff demonstrated a strong ethos of teamwork during facilitation of the play-based programme of learning. A key person system was observed by the inspector; the members of staff demonstrated an awareness of each child's interests, capabilities, and preferences. The service operated an open-door policy and the staff communicated informally upon the children's arrival and collection from the service. Photographs of the children's experiences are shared daily with each parent.

The indoor and outdoor environment provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative and enriching for the children. The children predominantly remained in the outdoor area for the sessional period with the exception of open-ended free play indoors when they arrived in the service. The curriculum theme was displayed on the gate at the entrance to the outdoor area. The children engaged in various forms of play and learning that included: instrumental music in the tunnel, creative artwork, the life cycle of the bee-sensory play, sand play, pretend play in the mud kitchen and fairy garden and use of the slide. The children conversed and sang with their peers in a seated area located under a willow tree and the wooden benches. Planter sections accommodated the children's fruit and vegetables.

The children congregated at different times around a water tank which accommodated tadpoles discussing the lifecycle of the frog. The children led the programme of learning and were consulted for planning activities for the following day.

Mealtime took place in a covered section in the outdoor area and was observed to be a sociable occasion. The adults and children sat together and conversed amicably together. Storage boxes in the outdoor area accommodated a large quantity of toys, materials and equipment for the children. The children could readily access these boxes and the staff informed the inspector that based on the children's choices the designated areas and equipment in the indoor and outdoor area are rotated frequently. Wooden materials demonstrating numbers, shapes, letters and colours were displayed around the boundary fence.

The indoor area was well planned with distinct interest areas offering lots of space for different types of play and learning activities. Low level tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtime. The areas of interest included a rest and library area. This area was stocked with a range of reading materials and provided a relaxing space for the children. A sand and water play table, a wooden puppet theatre, a home corner, a hairdresser area, a dress up area with a large range of costumes provided a space for sensory and imaginative play. Arts and craft facilities were available with memorable creations for the children's last day in preschool. Two large shelving units accommodated a range of play and learning materials. Individual learning journals were available demonstrating the children's learning journey through preschool and a graduation photograph.

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

The registered provider ensured that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school child attending the service:

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering or unsupervised children exiting the building.
- The children’s arrival and departure times were recorded in a logbook and the children were supervised at all times.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords on the windows were secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a fence and gated access and the children were supervised at all times.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition and completed cleaning schedules were available.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the programme of care.
- Running hot water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal bins were available in the care room, the toilet facility and the nappy changing area.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication is not routinely administered by the service. A service policy and documentation are available in the event that medication is required.

Fire Safety:

The fire escape routes and passageways in the service were clear from any obstructions.

- The fire assembly point was clearly displayed in the school yard.
- A child friendly poster was available to demonstrate the fire evacuation procedure and the reasons for completing fire drills at the exit door from the care room.

Outing:

- The registered provider demonstrated a good knowledge of completing outings. A service policy was available to inform the practice of conducting outings. A risk assessment and an outings checklist were available to ensure the safe conduct of outings.

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 and two members of staff had a record of up to date First Aid Responder training. The certificates were valid until the 10th of August 2024.

(2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the care room and a second first aid box was available for use in the outdoor area.

(b)
First aid boxes were 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 firefighting 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 in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 10th of May 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm maintenance service took place on the 18th of April 2023.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the care room.

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 twenty-two pre-school children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until July 2023.