

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE098				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mary K's Childcare Pre- School and Montessori				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Deerpark, Doora, Ennis, Co. Clare				
<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 N1K7				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Kennedy				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/08/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>31</td> <td>PM</td> <td>31</td> </tr> </table>	AM	31	PM	31
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Á. McCarthy & J. Hayes
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Mary K's Childcare Pre- School and Montessori was established in 2009, as a privately operated, full day care service. The service is located in a rural area, close to Doora National School in County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 17:00 accommodating children ranging in age from six months to six years. The children's care and learning are facilitated in a purpose-built building consisting of five care rooms.

During the inspection the care rooms in operation included the Baby room (age range: 13 months to 19 months), the Wobbler room (age range: 1 to 2 years), the Toddler room (age range: 2 to 3 years), the Junior Preschool room (age range: 2 to 4 years) and the Cabin-Senior Preschool room (age range: 3 to 5 years). An enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

Fourteen adults are employed by the service. On the 05 August 2025, the registered provider, seven adults and a student were present. The registered provider provided an administrative role and relief cover during breaks in the care rooms. The adults held qualifications at Level 7 and Level 8 or recognised equivalent qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications. The adults held records on file 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 may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) and (7)(a)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

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

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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 inspectors wish 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
- (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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

During the inspection the registered provider and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

On the 05 August 2025 the registered provider and the deputy were available on the premises at all times.

(c)

A clear management structure was observed in the service during the inspection. The staff roster demonstrated that a person in charge and a deputy were available at all times. Photographs were displayed with details of the adult's roles and responsibilities in the service. A record of induction training was available for each adult employed by the service.

(2)

Fourteen files were available for the registered provider and adults employed by the service. These files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

Twenty-three references with evidence of verification were available from past employers.

(b)

Five references with evidence of verification were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect all adults employed by the service. 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 six adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to 8 or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

The registered provider ensured that all employees and students were appropriately supervised. Records of completed training, induction training and reviews of the policies and procedures were available on each adult's files.

### 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)  
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children who attended the service.
- (2)  
An adequate number of adults cared for the children at all times during the inspection. On the 06 August 2025 Seven adults cared for the thirty-one children attending the service. The registered provider provided relief cover in care rooms.
- (8)(a)  
The staff roster demonstrated that 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.

#### 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 the age and level of development of the children. Five care rooms were in operation and assessed during the inspection.

#### 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 respectful manner, soft tones of voice were used, and the children's needs were responded to promptly. The children's sleep was attended to on an individual basis and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults reminded and supported children in handwashing after outdoor play, messy play and toileting and before eating. The children were supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children navigated the indoor and outdoor environments to engage in play-based activities. The adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's personal interests, and capabilities. The transitions between activities, sleep and mealtime were completed with ease and the children were notified in advance of any changes. The service prepared healthy and nutritious meals. The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. The children sat together and conversed amicably with the adults and each other during mealtime. Beverages were freely available and accessible to the children in the care rooms.

## Supporting Relationships Around Children:

Early relationship formation was supported through the continuity of care. The children could expect the same adults to be available to them each day in the service. A key person approach was observed in each care room; the adults were assigned yearly to rooms and were observed to offer support and praise to each child during the programme of care. The adults demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests, and individual capabilities. The children's lead was followed by the adults, and they rotated in accordance with the children's preferences. The children were notified in advance of any transitions in the programme of care and learning. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the care provided to the children. The adults communicated in a positive manner with parents or guardians through a messaging system, sharing daily observations and care provision on the childcare application system. Interactions during drop off and collection periods from the service were conducted in a positive manner. The individual learning journals captured the children's creative work and developmental progress; these are shared frequently with parents throughout the year and at the end of the school year.