

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE099
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mini's Pre-School
-------------------------	-------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Knockatemple, Kilnamona, Ennis, Co. Clare
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 PF67
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Caroline Rodgers
-------------------------------------	------------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	31/08/2023
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	8	PM	2
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	---

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A.McCarthy
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Mini's Pre-School is a privately operated, full day care service, in a new purpose-built premises located in Kilnamona, Ennis, County Clare. The service offers a programme of care and learning for children ranging in age from two to six years, Monday to Friday from 08:15 to 17:30 for thirty-eight weeks of the year. The programme of care and learning is facilitated in an open plan room indoors and in a large outdoor environment. School aged childcare is facilitated in the service each afternoon. The outdoor area is located to the rear and side of the building. Outdoor play was also facilitated in a specially designed wooden shed and two other sheds were used for storage purposes.

### Staffing

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2023 the registered provider, one staff member and a maintenance person/school aged childcare staff member were present in the preschool service. A relief person is available to provide cover for the staff. The childcare staff members and the relief person have an appropriate qualification 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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 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.

Four files were available in respect of the registered provider, the staff member, the maintenance person and the relief person. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Eight validated references were available from past employers.

(b)

Not applicable, as the available references were sourced from past employers.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider, the member of staff the maintenance person and the relief person.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as the staff, had not 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 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 attending the service.
- (2)  
An adequate number of adults supervised the children at all times during the inspection. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2023 two staff cared for eight children in the morning and two children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)  
The registered provider ensured that two staff were available on the premises at all times.

## 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)  
Fourteen 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)

##### Basic Needs of the Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff treated the children with positive regard demonstrating respect and warmth towards the children in their care. This was observed by the staff using soft, gentle tones of voice, positive language and offering praise and encouragement consistently. Positive behavioural strategies were used during all individual and group interactions. The programme of care and learning was facilitated in a relaxed and calm manner and the activities were guided by the children's personal interests and preferences. The children were notified in advance of transitions in the programme, the changes in activities 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. Mealtime was observed to be a sociable and unhurried occasion. The adults and children conversed amicably together.

The indoor area was well planned with distinct interest areas that offered a 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 dress up area, two large dolls houses, a construction area, a home corner, shelving with Montessori based and play materials and equipment were suitably resourced and accessible to the children.

The outdoor area offered a large space for the children to play and move freely. The outdoor area was well resourced with a large range of play equipment and materials. The children had free running space and opportunities to play games and cycle bicycles. A large sand area provided a space for all the children to engage in sensory play.

A specially designed wooden shed was available for arts and crafts activities and two additional sheds provided a space for the storage of equipment. A colourfully decorated caravan provided a den for the children to explore in.

The service operates an open-door policy and the staff communicated informally with parents upon the children's arrival and collection from the service. The family wall displayed the individual children's families and the children's siblings, and family events were discussed throughout the session. Photographs of the children's experiences are shared with each parent. Observations of the children's completed activities and the children's engagement with the community and a local fundraiser on Daffodil day that was led by the children was captured in photographic illustrations were available to view by the children and parents.

### 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:

- 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 outdoor play area was adequately secured with a fence and gated access and the children were supervised at all times.

##### Infection Control:

- The service and the equipment and materials within were maintained in a clean condition.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the session.
- Running hot water was available at the wash hand basins, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal bins were available in the care room and the toilet facilities.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication is not routinely administered by the service. However, a service policy and written documentation is available in the event that medication is required.

### Safe Sleep:

- Areas for rest and relaxation were available for the children. These areas had a teepee tent, a couch and armchair and a relaxing area with a range of reading materials.

### Fire Safety:

- The staff and children conducted a fire drill in a calm and prompt manner upon the inspector's arrival.
- Fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- A clearly identifiable fire assembly was located in the service's car park.

### Outing:

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

## 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 a staff member had a record of up to date First Aid Responder training. The certificates were valid until the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

(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 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 in the service. A fire drill took place on the inspector's arrival on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 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 in September 2022.

(4)

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

### 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-four pre-school children attending the service. The policy is valid until September 2024.