

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE099			
Name of Service:	Mini's Pre-School			
Address of Service:	Knockatemple, Kilnamona, Ennis, Co. Clare			
Eircode:	V95 PF67			
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Rodgers			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	14/10/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	3
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:	Á.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

Mini's Pre-School is a purpose-built premises within the owners domestic dwelling. The service offers a full day care service 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 interconnecting rooms indoors and in a large outdoor environment. School aged childcare is facilitated in the service each afternoon. The outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the building. Outdoor play is also facilitated in a specially designed wooden structure and in a play area with synthetic grass surface.

Staffing

Three adults are employed by the service. On the 14 October 2025 the registered provider and a second adult were present in the pre-school service. The adults held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. The adults had records on file of 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 may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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

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

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the two adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Six references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

- (b)
Not applicable, as the required references were sourced from past employers in respect of the adults employed by the service.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three adults currently employed in 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 not required in respect of the adults working in the service as no adult had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children 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)
During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)

On the 14 October 2025, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Two adults cared for the six children attending the service in the morning and three children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

During the inspection two adults were available in the service. The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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)

Basic Needs of the Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development and well-being to be supported by the adults. The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during all interactions with the children. The children guided the programme of learning and were supported by the adults in individual and group activities. The adults facilitated the session in a calm and respectful manner and demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests and preferences. The children were notified in advance of transitions in the programme and 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 at the table.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor area was well planned with distinct interest areas that offered a space for challenging and varying 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 reading area. This area was stocked with a range of reading materials and provided a relaxing space for use by the children. Additional play areas included a dress up area, four large dolls houses, a construction area, a home and shop corner and shelving with Montessori based and play and educational based materials and equipment. These areas were extensively resourced and accessible to the children.

The walls displayed a map of the local community and photographs of the children in the community, other areas had literacy, numerical and alphabetical learning aids, children's individual creations and curriculum planning displays. The children upon arrival access a check in board with their photographs displayed and get to choose a feeling for the day and place it on this board and choose a photograph to depict what activities they wish to engage in each day.

The outdoor play area offered a large space for the children to play and move freely. The outdoor area was suitably 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 as an additional space for play based activities, and two additional sheds provided a space for the storage of equipment. A colourfully decorated caravan provides a den for the children to explore in.

Supporting Relationships:

The service operates an open-door policy and the adults communicated informally with parents upon the children's arrival and collection from the service. The family wall displayed the individual children's families, the children's siblings and events that had taken place. 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. Individual learning journals were available and accessible to the children demonstrating the children's developmental progress and completed activities and artwork.

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 monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate to protect the children within.
- A record sheet was available to record any visitor that enters the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were maintained demonstrating the frequency and measures taken to clean the service.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals. This included after messy play, using the toilet and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- Documentation was available detailing parental consent and a parental signature after medication was administered to children in the service.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication procedure and policy.

Safe Sleep:

- An area was available for children to rest and relax when required. This area included two large couches with adjacent shelving filled with a large range of reading materials. Additional blankets and cushions were freely accessible within the care room.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drill drills are completed by the staff and children.
- The adults and children readily identified the fire assembly point in the car park at the front of the building.
- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

Outing:

- Outings are undertaken once a year by the service.
- The service maintains records of a risk assessment and a checklist for completed outings.
- The registered provider demonstrated a good knowledge of the outings policy.

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)

Two adults working directly with the children held records of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service 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)

A record for completed monthly fire drills were available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 02 September 2025.

(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 maintenance service took place respectively on the 02 and 09 September 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed at both entry/exit points in the building.

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 children attending the service. The policy is valid until 27 March 2026.