

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE131
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Name of Service:	Respond Early Years Service, Stonecourt
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Address of Service:	Stonecourt Comm Buildings, Drumbiggle, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 NYN3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Rourke
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Quality and Regulation Directorate, Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes
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

Respond early years service first opened in 1996. It provides full day education and care to pre-school children aged 2 - 6 years of age. The service operates from 09.00hrs to 16.00hrs and the setting caters for a maximum of 25 pre-school children. It operates from a purpose-built building in an urban residential area. There is one large playroom which can be subdivided and one additional smaller room available to the pre-school children. Facilities for outdoor play are available on site and accessed directly from the main playroom.

Staffing

There are three staff working in the service and all staff have childcare qualifications. The registered provider does not work on site in the service.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations

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

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

Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-school Child (1)(a) to (i), (3)(a)(b)(c)

Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
Regulation 25 First Aid
Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures
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. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

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, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The person in charge and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

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

(a)

Four written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Four written and validated references were available in respect of adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four 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 two adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
The three adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at 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 26 September 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Three adults cared for the eleven children in attendance.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service 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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

The service held records for the twelve children enrolled in the service. The records included the required particulars outlined from (a) to (i).

(3)(a)(b)(c)

The children's registration forms were available for review in the service by the relevant people outlined under (a)(b)(c).

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 the age and stage of development of the children. Two care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, engaged with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. Staff supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during nappy changes and toileting. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. A healthy eating policy was in place, and all food was provided by the parents and stored appropriately in a fridge in the kitchen area. The children were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent and mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. The adults offered praise and encouragement, and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and the children were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities in the indoor and outdoor environments. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area for play based activities.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests, and individual capabilities. The adults followed the children's lead in the care rooms, and the children were supported in individual and group play. The rooms accommodated

visual routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care. The children were notified and consulted in advance of changes in the activities. The transitions in the programme of care were completed cohesively in a calm manner in the care rooms. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the programme of care and education. The adults communicated informally with parents/guardians on messaging systems and during collection periods.

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 secure 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 area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within. The children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in the record book.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet 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 were stored correctly in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- The adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's administration of medication policy and procedure.
- Documentation was available should medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- 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:

- An outing was not conducted on the day of inspection. A policy was available to inform parents/guardians and the adults working in the service of the service procedure for conducting outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

An outdoor structure in the main outdoor play area was located close to the boundary wall. This created a narrow pathway where children could collide with the capping on the wall and sustain injury. The children were observed trying to run through this area during the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A fence and gate have been installed to prevent the children accessing behind the outdoor shelter. This will prevent any issues occurring in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The service submitted photographic evidence of the fence and gate that were installed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken have addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23 General safety.

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 had a record of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the kitchen area of 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 in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 13 June 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 took place respectively in February and July 2025.

(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 105 children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy is valid until the 28 February 2026.