

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CW002		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Absolute Beginners Crèche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Rathsillan Estate, Carlow Road, Tullow, Carlow.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	R93 PE00		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Valerie Coughlan		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	13/04/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	40	PM 40
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Wexford.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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

This full day care service is located in a housing estate just outside Tullow, in county Carlow. A service is provided to children aged 6 months to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 7.30am and 6.15pm. The service is operated from a detached single storey bungalow. The service has three early years rooms, two designated sleep rooms, toilets and nappy changing facilities, an onsite kitchen, and four outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the property.

### Staffing

There were 10 staff present on the day of inspection including the manager who was also working directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework

### 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 announced/unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations.

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment
- Regulation 10 Policies and procedures
- Regulation 11 Staffing levels
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child
- Regulation 22 Food and Drink
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of child
- Regulation 25 First aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety

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
- (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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) (b)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation it was established that an additional four staff had been employed in the service since the last inspection on 24 February 2021.

(a)(b)

There were eight written and validated references available on file from past employers.

- (c)  
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all four staff members.
- (d)  
Police vetting was not required as none of the new staff employed had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)  
All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures, and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies on the administration of medication and the safe sleep policy were reviewed on this inspection and were found to be complete and specific to the setting.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

There was an adequate number of staff working with the children during the day of inspection.

(2)

On the morning of inspection there were 40 children aged from 6 months to 6 years in the care of 10 staff.

In the afternoon there were 40 children aged from 6 months to 6 years of age in the care of 10 staff.

The manager was in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(4)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained for the duration of the inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

The inspector noted that although the adult to child ratio was always maintained during the observation period of the inspection, staff who had been on duty since 7.30am had still not gone to break at 1.40pm when the inspector went for her break. The staff rota did not include a roster for break times in the service.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

A roster has been developed to include the provision of break times for all staff in the service.

## Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the roster now in place in the service has been received by the inspector.

## Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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*

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The manager ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection. The staff in the baby room were observed getting the babies ready to play outside. The babies were wrapped up in their all-weather suits and waterproof booties. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this gear allowed them to get fresh air and crawl in the grass in their designated play area. The inspector observed the babies were placed in two buggies which held four babies each. They were taken for a walk around the estate by two staff members.

Staff were observed to be engaged with the children in their care. Staff in the ECCE 1 room were observed playing with the children in their designated outdoor area. The children were observed spending the majority of the day in the outdoor area. Children were observed playing in groups and using their imagination during free play in the outdoor area. For example, three children were observed playing in the wooden bus pretending to be bus drivers.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment, arts and crafts materials, small cars, diggers, and dinosaurs. The play equipment in the baby room was well organised and easily accessible for the babies. There was a ball pool, boxes of rattlers and small animals. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area which was varied and appropriate to the age and stages of the children attending the service. For example, in the playground directly outside the ECCE 1 room there was a large wooden bus, a jungle gym, picnic benches, and a selection of ride on toys and balance bikes.

### 1(b)

The manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. During mealtimes younger children were encouraged to feed themselves and given help if they could not manage to feed themselves. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and given help as required. Staff sat with the children singing and talking to them during their mealtime.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly during the day and when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. Staff were observed chatting to the children while changing their nappies. Children were helped to wash their hands afterwards. The nappy changing policy was on display in the nappy changing unit next to the baby room. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service used a mobile phone application to communicate with parents.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

### Compliance Information

The service promoted healthy eating and all the foods and snacks were prepared and served from the kitchen in the service. There was a 3-week rotating menu on display in the service which listed the snacks and meals on offer to the children. The children enjoyed a freshly cooked dinner of minced beef, peppers, mixed vegetable in a tomato sauce with pasta. Children who asked for extra portions were given extra servings.

Babies were served in their highchairs in their room. Babies were encouraged to self-feed and given assistance when required. Children were given cheese and ham toasted sandwiches for their afternoon snack. Staff were observed helping children to wash hands and set the tables. Water and milk were available to drink.

## 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 manager had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

#### General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was made of glass. All radiators were thermostatically controlled. The fire doors were not obstructed. Cleaning agents were stored in areas that were inaccessible to children.

#### Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean on the day of inspection. There were no obvious maintenance repairs required. Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years rooms, toilets, and nappy changing areas. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm

thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after messy play. Staff were observed washing their hands and using the hand gel provided by the service on a regular basis. There was a system in place for the regular cleaning of mouthable toys in the baby room.

### Administration of Medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy in place in the service. Records of administration of medication were reviewed on the day of inspection. These were in line with best practice and were signed by two staff following the administration of the medication for the child as stated in the policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector were clear in their understanding of the policy that was in place in the service.

### Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector were aware of the importance of following the procedures in place to ensure the safety of the sleeping children in their care. Staff were observed monitoring and recording the sleeping children's colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes. The temperature in the sleep room beside the baby room was recorded at 18°C on the day of inspection

## 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)

There was a person trained in first aid immediately available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.

### 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
  - (b) an employee, and
  - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place in the service on 3 March 2023.

(b) There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 20 April 2022, and the smoke alarm on 10 December 2022.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.