

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR111		
Name of Service:	Absorbent Minds		
Address of Service:	25 The Avenue, Woodpark, Ballinteer, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D16 X239		
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne-Marie Hendrick		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM 12
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill		
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

Absorbent Minds was established in 2007 and is one of two services owned and operated privately by the registered provider. The early years service is registered to provide full day care. This includes a sessional service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service caters for children aged from 2 to 6 years. The service is open daily from 8am to 6pm. A morning sessional service operates from 9am-12pm.

The early years service is located in a purpose-built two storey premises in a residential area of Ballinteer in Dublin 16. Care of the children is provided across four pre-school rooms on the ground floor. Three of the care rooms named; the big room, the grey room and the small room are provided within the premises. The fourth pre-school room named the white room is provided in a separate building to the rear of the premises. A large outdoor play area is available for the children to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

In total seven staff are employed in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider was present and provided additional support to staff as required on the day of inspection.

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.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

9(1)(a), (b), (2) (a)-(d) (3) and (4) Management and Recruitment.

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels.

16 (1)(g), (h), (i), (j) and (k) Record in Relation to Pre-school Service.

19(1)(a)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

28 Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the grey room and the small room and did not include the big room and the white room.

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 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.*

(3) *The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

(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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The inspection focused a review of files for three new staff who were employed in the service since the last inspection on the 29 November 2023 and included a review of Garda vetting for all staff employed in the service.
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers were available for three staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all adults employed in the service. Five were dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for the Renewal of Garda Vetting.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced as required for one staff member who had lived outside Ireland for a period of longer than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing three staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) There was no police vetting available for one staff member who had lived outside Ireland for a period longer than six months.

(3) All the procedure specified in paragraph (2) were not completed prior to the staff member being appointed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff member has been asked to obtain the police vetting and issue it to us as soon as it is received. Clearance from Georgia received.

(3)

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of police vetting.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the actions submitted. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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 were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were thirty eight children attending the service being supervised by five adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) Details of children's attendance was accurately recorded in each care room.

(i) A staff roster was available.

(j) The registered provider confirmed to date no medication has been required to be administered to a pre-school child. Signed parental consent was available in the event it was required.

(k) Details of accidents and incidents were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

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

(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), (b)

Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. The staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They spoke kindly to them, listened to them and responded appropriately. Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to children what was going to happen next and used songs to support transitions. Children demonstrated they were familiar with the songs and routine. Healthy lunches were provided by parents. Lunch time was relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as staff engaged with them helping when required. Children were given plenty of time to enjoy their food. Drinking water was freely available, each child had their own water container. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes. Play was child led and children were observed to move freely around the care rooms playing independently and in groups and any minor disagreements were handled sensitively. Children's choices were respected with children being given the opportunity to choose their own activities during free play. Children's nappies were changed regularly and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Older children used the toilet independently. Staff report they communicate daily with parents as they bring and collect their children from the service.

The care rooms were suitably laid out and equipped with a variety of age-appropriate toys and materials, to support children to engage in various forms of play and learning. Designated areas of interest were available including imaginary play, construction areas and art materials. These areas were well resourced with equipment and props to support imaginative and creative play and learning. Equipment was available on low level shelves easily visible and accessible to the children. Designated cosy areas were available and used by children to take a break or rest from activities. Children’s artwork was displayed on the walls in their rooms. All children had an opportunity for outdoor play. The outdoor area was safely secure and equipped with a variety of play equipment and toys for the children to enjoy.

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 door to the service and the outdoor area were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach of children. Cord blinds were secured and there were no trailing cables or flexes present. The kitchen and storage areas were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

Children were supervised washing their hands before eating and after outdoor play. Good hygiene practices by staff were observed including washing their hands prior to lunch and cleaning tables before and after children ate. Foot pedal bins were in working order and used appropriately by adults and older children. Cleaning schedules were available and maintained.

Administration of Medication:

Staff were familiar with the medication policy when spoken to. A system was in place to record medication if it was required. A care plan was available for a child who had a specific medical condition and the required medication was clearly labelled and stored safely. When spoken to staff demonstrated they were familiar with the care plan and the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A Garda vetting disclosures available for two adults was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.'

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Garda Vetting has been sought for both staff members. One has been issued. The other is still being processed as it is for the registered provided and is going through Tusla. All dates on vetting have been checked to ensure they are renewed before the 3-year mark in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy Garda vetting for one adult.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance.

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 ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times.

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous place on the premises and was available to the children attending the service at all times.

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) The monthly record of fire drills was available. The last fire drill was completed on 23 October 2025.
 - (b) The number type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on the 14 April 2025 and the smoke alarm was serviced on the 24 October 2025.
 - (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the main hall and each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated the pre-school was adequately insured. The insurance certificate was displayed providing cover for fifty pre-school children. The certificate was valid from the 28 March 2025 until the 27 March 2026.