

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS037
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Choice Childcare Newcastle
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Old School House, Main Street, Newcastle, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D22 EE05
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Elaine O'Meara
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	29	PM	31
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Sarah Quigley & Helen Sutherland
<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
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### Description of service

Choice Childcare Newcastle is a full day care service located in an urban area in Newcastle, South Co. Dublin. Care and education are provided to children aged between one and six years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18:30 hours, including a sessional service from 9:00am to 12:30pm for 38 weeks of the year. A school age service is also provided. The service operates from a purposely adapted single storey premises which was formerly a schoolhouse. Four care rooms are located in the main building for preschool children, and a purpose built building located in the outdoor play area accommodates school aged children. A large outdoor play space is located to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The preschool service currently employs thirteen staff members, including the designated person in charge and a cook. On the day of inspection, eleven staff members were present, nine of whom were working directly with the children. The registered provider was not present during the inspection and does not work directly 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an assessment of the following regulations;

Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1)(2) - Staffing levels

Regulation 19(1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25(1) - First aid

Regulation 29(d) - Premises

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 inspectors wish 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

*(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

(2)  
Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that nine adults had commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023. The following records were available for the nine adults:

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the nine adults which had been appropriately verified.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the nine adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all thirteen adults employed.

(d) Six of the new employees required International Police vetting, the required documentation was available for the six adults.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the nine adults commencing employment in the service.

(4) Seven of the adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. Two adults who did not hold a recognised qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children throughout the inspection. There were nine adults allocated to work directly with thirty-one children during the inspection. The centre manager was available to assist in the care rooms where required.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

### 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

The inspectors observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported. The indoor areas were laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for bags and coats with the children's names and photographs attached. There were some interest areas including construction areas, dress up, and home corners. Play materials were visible and accessible to the children on open shelves.

Areas with soft seating were available for children to rest or take a break from activities. Inspectors observed children engaging in various activities including sensory and imaginative play.

The children were supported to be independent with their personal care. They used the toilet as needed with staff reminding them to wash their hands afterwards. Younger children had their nappies changed at regular intervals and as required. The children brought morning snacks in from home and staff reported two meals, including a hot dinner, were provided by the service daily. Adults sat with the children when they were eating and engaged in conversation. Drinks of water were available, and milk was served with lunch. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children and engaging with them positively throughout the inspection.

Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. Staff told inspectors they use an interactive messaging application to communicate with the children's parents, in addition to engaging with them at drop-off/collection. They informed inspectors that formal opportunities are provided to meet with parents/guardians if required.

### 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 inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff members, and inspection of the premises that the following steps were taken to safeguard children attending:

##### General Safety:

Steps were implemented to ensure the safety of the children. The entry and exit points were secured to prevent children from leaving the service unattended or unauthorised individuals from gaining access. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Potentially hazardous materials such as cleaning products and medicines were safely stored out of children's reach.

##### Infection Control:

Some measures were taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. In the younger care rooms, soothers were stored individually to avoid cross-contamination. Each child was provided with their own bed linen, which staff reported was laundered weekly and stored individually between uses. Staff were aware of guidelines on exclusion

periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses. Warm water, soap and paper towels were available for handwashing and both staff and children washed their hands at regular intervals. Plates were provided to children for all meals and snacks.

### Administration of Medication:

Medications were stored in their original packaging out of reach of children.

### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the procedures in place during discussions with the inspectors. Sleep logs were maintained in the younger care rooms at sleep time, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Appropriate low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were recorded and maintained at the required temperature ranges.

### 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 and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. The cord from an air filtration unity in the hallway of the service was trailing and in reach of the children posing a risk of injury.

### Infection Control:

2. The pedal bin in use in the outdoor play area to dispose of waste including soiled nasal tissues was broken meaning the lid had to be handled by staff and children posing a risk of cross contamination.
3. Some of the nappy changing practices observed were inconsistent and at variance with the infection control policy in place in the service, posing a risk of cross contamination as follows:
  - One staff member did not wear protective gloves during a nappy change, and did not wash their hands prior to re-dressing the child.
  - A staff member was observed cleaning the soiled nappy changing mat after washing their hands following a nappy change.

- A pedal operated bin was not in use for the disposal of nappies as required. Staff members were observed repeatedly handling a locked wall compartment containing a chute which led to an external bin to dispose of nappies.

### **Administration of Medication:**

4. Some of the procedures in place for the administration of both prescribed and non-prescription medications to children in the service were at variance with the policy in place and posed a risk of incorrect dosage to a child as follows:
  - Staff members reported that parents were not filling in required documentation to provide pre-consent for the administration of prescribed medications to children. Staff stated that they were filling in the pre-consent form information on the medication to be administered and parents were signing this at a later stage.
  - Some of the records reviewed did not contain evidence that a second adult was present at the time medication was administered to ensure the correct dosage and procedure was adhered to.

### **Fire Safety:**

5. Documentation reviewed during the inspection evidenced that all preschool children were not signed into the service as required. Attendance records in the Middle Room room were reviewed by the inspector at 10:44am. Two children in attendance, who the staff member reported had arrived at the service at 09:40am and 09:45am, had not been signed into the attendance book which staff reported is taken with them in the event of an evacuation. Inaccurate records of attendance may hinder the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency.

### **Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

The registered provider submitted the following response:

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

#### **General Safety:**

1. The service ensured all cords are to be safely stored away from children and staff are notified to risk assess this area where they are stored. A sign has been placed above the air filtration units , staff were spoken to about risk assessing the area and check cord placement on more regular basis.

### Infection Control:

2. The pedal bin outside was replaced with a new one, ensuring the pedal is in correct working order without the need to touch the bin. Staff have been reminded to check the bins on a daily basis to ensure they are in working order and to report to manager if anything needs to be replaced.
3. The nappy changing policy was reviewed and discussed with all staff members to remind them of the importance of consistently following each step of the procedure with every child. A new step added to nappy changing procedure regarding the nappy shoot door which must be cleaned after each use. The service will review nappy changing procedure on regular basis and more spot checks from management will be occurring during nappy changes to ensure staff are being consistent with the nappy changing procedure.

### Administration of Medication:

4. Staff have been trained on the correct way to fill out the medication forms and informed that parents must stay to fill the consent forms otherwise the service cannot administer medicine. Also, the need for a second adult to witness the admin of medication was discussed and that teachers that work in rooms by themselves are to call for assistance when administering medicine. Management will check medication records on a daily basis and offer support when needed.

### Fire Safety:

5. Management communicated with all staff and reminded them of the importance of signing children in as soon as they arrive on the premises for the importance of supervision, fire safety, and all other relevant policies and procedures. Spots checks will be carried out by the management team on a daily basis on the record and attendance books.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

### 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.*

#### Non - Compliance Information

(1)  
An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was not available in the service at all times on the day of inspection. From 7:30am to 9:00am no staff member present held the required qualification. It is acknowledged that some staff members present at that time had been trained in paediatric first aid.

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

The registered provider submitted the following response;

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Two additional staff members have been FAR trained since the inspection and all working shifts from 7.30-6.30 are now covered. The management team will ensure all shifts are covered daily with staff that are FAR trained when completing the roster.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

#### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d) Some areas of the service were found not to be cleaned, maintained and repaired as required as follows:
- The paint in the children's bathroom in Pod Two beneath the hand-dryer was heavily stained and soiled and required a deep clean.
  - The flooring in the Pod One bathroom was heavily stained and soiled with a build up of dirt in places and required a deep clean.

- Heavy accumulations of dirt, dust, and debris were present on surfaces in the Pod One, Middle Room, and Pod Two room indicating the areas had not been effectively cleaned.
- The lacquered surface of a low-level table in the Pod Two room used to store children's drinks had worn away, exposing the porous wood beneath which could not be effectively cleaned.
- The fridge in the Pod One room which was used to store children's medication required a deep clean.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Hand dryer -Staff have been advised to use a certain cleaning product when required if stains are hard to remove.

Flooring- Staff have been advised to use a certain cleaning product and a scouring pad to help remove the tougher staining on floor. Surfaces and storage in the classrooms have been more detailed on the cleaning sheet and staff are required to clean more regularly on a daily basis and a deeper clean on a Friday. Drink bottles that were in a tray will be placed in a different area of classroom and the wooden table has been removed. Classroom fridges are used daily, and the staff has been advised to keep a closer eye on the cleanliness of the fridges throughout the day. Management have reviewed the cleaning and risk assessment sheets for the rooms and have gone through these changes with the staff, to ensure all areas are covered in both classroom and bathroom.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

## Summary Comment

The actions outlined as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.