

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL268		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Skerries Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	28 Balbriggan Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K34 FY71		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Farrell		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	31/05/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM 26
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle and S Cully		
<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

Skerries creche is an Early years' service which was established in Skerries, Co Dublin in 1999 and is registered to accommodate pre-school children from 0 to 6 years of age on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis. The service is registered to operate from 7.30am to 6pm each weekday, with eligible pre-school children facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am – 12.00pm daily for 38 weeks annually. The service is located in a 2-storey converted residential property with 3 care rooms in operation. The Baby/ Wobbler room and the Toddler room are located on the ground floor of the service and the Preschool room is located on the first floor. An additional room is available on the first floor for the children attending the Preschool room to use for art activities and imaginary play. An enclosed outdoor space is located to the rear of the service. Two separate sleep rooms are available, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor of the service.

### Staffing

There are 11 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider is not allocated to a care room but provides support across all care rooms in addition to managing the day-to-day operations of the service. A cook is employed in the service in addition to a staff member who assists with housekeeping duties.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10, 11,16,19,23,25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16– record in relation to pre-school service.

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, 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise in the absence of the registered provider when required.

(b) The named person in charge in the absence of the registered provider was present in the service when the inspectors arrived, and the registered provider arrived shortly thereafter.

A total of 11 staff files were reviewed. Nine staff work directly with the early year's children attending the service.

(2)(a) &(b) Twenty written, validated references were available for the 11 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(a) Thirteen references were from past employers.

(b) Seven references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 11 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(4) Seven staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) A second validated written reference was not available for 2 staff members.

(4) Two staff members who worked directly with the children did not have any documentary evidence on file to show that they held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a)&(b) Validated references obtained and submitted.

(4) Proof of childcare qualifications obtained from colleges and submitted.

### Preventive Action

(2) (a)&(b) & (4) Manager to make sure each member of staff each have two validated references and proof of appropriate qualification.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Two validated written references.

Qualifications for one staff member.

## Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted; the registered provider has confirmed that one staff member who required proof of qualifications is no longer employed in the service.

## 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

On the day of inspection, the following were policies reviewed :

- Administration of medication
- Infection control
- Behaviour management
- Safe sleep
- Authorisation to collect children.

The infection control policy included exclusion periods for infectious illnesses which was on display on the ground floor notice board. There was also a procedure for handwashing which was on display in the sanitary facility.

The safe sleep policy was kept alongside sleep records and described safe sleep practices.

#### Non-Compliance Information

The following policies were incomplete.

##### 1. Administration of medication

This policy did not include:

- Procedures for managing an emergency that requires medication.
- Procedures for dealing with an individual care plan for a child who requires it.

##### 2. Behaviour management:

This policy was incomplete on the day of inspection. The procedure for responding to children behaviour when conflict arose suggested that a child would spend time alone and away from peers. The inspectors acknowledge that this practice was not observed on the day, and staff and the registered provider confirmed that this was not practice used in the service and the policy was being reviewed.

##### 3. Authorisation to collect children:

There was no policy and procedure available to outline practices in regard to:

- Who is authorised to collect a child and procedures in place when a non-authorised person attempts to collect a child.
- A procedure for when a parent/guardian nominates a person to collect their child whose details are not on the child's file.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

#### 1. Administration of medication:

Medication administration policy reviewed and updated. Procedures for administering anti febrile medication added to our existing policy. Documenting procedure of administering anti febrile medication updated.

#### 2. Behaviour management:

Behaviour management policy reviewed with staff and updated.

#### 3. Authorisation to collect children:

Authorization for Collecting Children policy created, and all staff informed.

### Preventive Action

#### 1. Administration of medication:

All staff made aware of new documentation of anti febrile medication.

#### 2. Behaviour management:

All staff made aware of behaviour management policy.

#### 3. Authorisation to collect children:

All staff made aware of Authorisation to collect children policy.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of policies submitted.

## Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Baby/ Wobbler room there were 7 children aged 1 year 2 months to 2 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In the Toddler room there were 6 children aged 2 years 9 months to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 1 adult.
- In the Montessori room there were 15 children aged 4 years 2 months to 5 years 1 months being cared for by 2 staff members.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster.

### 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;

#### Compliance Information

(h) A record was maintained of all children in attendance in the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(i) The staff rosters that was available in the service indicated the start time of the staff members shift period only. The finish time was not documented. A system was not in place for the staff members to sign in on a daily basis.

(j) Medication records reviewed indicated that parents did not sign the administration of medication record to indicate that they had been informed that their child had medication administered whilst in attendance in the service.

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

##### Corrective Action

- (i) A sign in and out system created and to be used by staff from now on.
- (j) Staff to be reminded to be more vigilant in getting parents to sign when a child has been given medication in the service.

##### Preventive Action

- (i) Manager to inform all staff about new sign in and out form.
- (j) Manager to continue to remind staff about informing parents and asking for them to sign any.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the services roster.

#### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

##### Basic needs:

- Mealtimes observed on the day of inspection were social and relaxed experiences, the Early years practitioners sat with the children engaging them in conversation whilst encouraging the children's independence with eating and provided support as required.
- Nappy changing occurred at scheduled times and more frequently as needed throughout the day. Practitioners were observed chatting to the children throughout the process and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- Two separate sleep rooms are provided in the service, one containing 5 standard cots is located on the ground floor and one with 4 standard cots on the first floor. The children in the Baby room were observed being placed to sleep when they exhibited signs of tiredness and if their sleep times coincided with mealtimes, they were given their meal when they woke up.
- The children were encouraged and supported to move freely in the service and whilst in the outdoor play area. Children chose the materials and resources that they wanted to play with, and the practitioners provided guidance and support as required.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- The early years practitioners greeted children and parents individually on arrival, spending time conversing and sharing information in a welcoming and friendly way.

- There was a consistency of staff provision in the service, and this was evidenced as the practitioners were very familiar with the children and were observed engaging the children in conversation regarding events at home and their families.
- Throughout the care rooms positive behaviour was supported with the practitioners positively affirming the children for their efforts and achievements.

### Physical and material environment:

- Overall, play resources and equipment were available on low level shelving for the children to take and return materials as they chose. The children in the care rooms demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- Tables and chairs provided in the care rooms were appropriate to the age and stage of the children attending the individual care rooms.
- An enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the service provided an alternative change of environment for the children. The area was surfaced with an all-weather safety surface, a plastic play house, wall mounted blackboard and ride on toys were provided for the children to play with

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Physical and material environment:

1. There were limited opportunities for sensorial and natural play in the Baby/Wobbler room due to the over reliance on plastic play materials and a lack of real, natural and sensory play resources. The plastic materials provided insufficiently stimulated the senses and curtailed the children's learning and developmental experiences. Furthermore, there were no interest areas such as a home area or construction area for the children to engage with.
2. The books in the Baby/Wobbler room were stored on high shelves and out of reach of the children.
3. The interest areas in the Toddler room were poorly developed and insufficiently resourced as evidenced in the limited range of materials available to the children in the home area. There was a lack of resources including food packaging, pots, pans and cooking utensils for the children to extend their play with. A wooden dolls house was empty with no equipment provided for the children to use. Additionally, some resources in the room including tabletop resources were stored on shelves which were out of reach of the children and therefore inaccessible to them.
4. Storage and shelving in the Montessori rooms were over-crowded and disorganised which prevents children from choosing materials with ease from shelves, putting materials back or organising their play.

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

#### Corrective Action

##### Physical and material environment:

1. Sensorial and natural play does occur in the baby/toddler rooms. More sensorial and natural play will be introduced. eg rice/sand play, apple smelling playdough, water play, finger painting, music ect.
2. Books lowered to a child friendly height.
3. The baby/Toddler room does have material/resources such as toy kitchen utensils – these may not have been played with on the day concerned. Equipment to be bought on an on-going basis. The tabletop resources moved to a child friendly level where possible.
4. Storage and shelving to be decluttered in the Montessori Room and better organisation to be maintained.

#### Preventive Action

##### Physical and material environment:

1. Staff to be encouraged to include sensorial and natural play on a daily basis.
2. Staff to be reminded to keep resources at a child friendly level.
3. Staff in the Montessori room to be reminded to keep in the room in an organised manner.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of room environments.

### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years' service. Entry to the service was accessible through a call bell system which staff members operated.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was safely stored in the service.

##### Safe Sleep:

- All children aged less than 2 years had access to a standard cot to sleep in.

##### Fire Safety:

- The records demonstrated that fire drills were practiced on a regular basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Cleaning products were not stored out of the reach of children in the Montessori room.
2. There was a trailing cable from a plug socket to a television placed on top of a storage unit. This posed a risk of a trip or fall with the possibility of the tv falling from the unit and injuring a child or adult.

##### Infection Control:

3. The steps in the services nappy changing policy were observed not to be followed as evidenced by the following:
  - A practitioner was observed wearing the same disposable apron to change 5 children's nappies.
  - The children's hands were not washed following nappy changing.

- A practitioner was observed not to wash their hands following nappy changing.
- The nappy changing mat in the service was cleaned with a reusable cloth towel. This noncompliance was identified at the last inspection of the service and the registered provider stated in the corrective and preventative action plan submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate that the nappy changing mat would be cleaned with disposable paper.
- 4. The children in all rooms in the service did not wash their hands before they had their meals and snacks.
- 5. Throughout the service the children afternoon snacks which they brought with them from home and contained perishable items including meat and dairy products were stored in the children's bags and not placed in the fridge on arrival to the service. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.
- 6. The procedure for the cleaning and sterilising of mouthed toys was not being implemented correctly in the Baby/Wobbler room. The current practice, as explained by the early year's practitioner, was to soak mouthed toys in a solution of sterilising fluid and hot water" a couple of times per week". This practice results in ineffective cleaning and disinfection of toys and increases risk of cross contamination.
- 7. There were no mattress covers on mattresses in the sleep rooms in the service. This provided insufficient protection in the event of the mattresses getting wet or soiled.

### Administration of Medication:

- 8. The system in place in the service for the documentation of the administration of anti-febrile medication was inadequate. The practitioner in the Baby room reported that when anti febrile medication is administered to children attending the Baby/Wobbler room it is written in the child's daily journal and whilst most children have daily journals not all bring them home. Parents/guardians must sign on the child's collection from the service for any anti febrile medication that has been administered to a child on any given day as a means of ensuring that they have been informed.

### Fire Safety:

- 9. Three children aged less than 2 years were placed to sleep in the sleep room on the first floor of the service. Children aged less than 2 years should not be placed to sleep on the first floor in case of an emergency occurring and the building requiring evacuation.
- 10. The fire doors of the Montessori rooms were propped open, one door was propped open with a chair and two doors were propped open with a door stopper. In the event of a fire, the fire doors would not be effective in preventing the spread of fire.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective Action

##### General Safety:

1. All cleaning products removed out of reach of children.
2. Plug cable removed.

##### Infection Control:

3. All staff reminded about and encouraged to follow correct nappy changing guidelines.
4. Staff reminded to encourage children to wash their hands before their meals and snacks.
5. Staff reminded to place any perishable items of food from the children's bags into the fridge on arrival.
6. Staff reminded about Infection control- Cleaning and sterilising of mouthed toys to be completed daily.
7. Every mattress that is used has a mattress protector. In the case of a mattress protector getting soiled, it will be discarded and replaced.

##### Administration of Medication:

8. New system put in place in the service for the documentation of the administration of anti-febrile medication. Staff informed and asked to get parents to sign if administered.

##### Fire Safety:

9. Staff reminded about fire safety policy- children less than two years to be in the cot room on the ground level going forward.
10. Staff reminded to keep fire doors closed at all times.

#### Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

Manager to continue to remind staff about the general safety of the service.

##### Infection Control:

Manager to continue to remind staff about the infection control policies and make sure they are adhered too.

##### Administration of Medication:

Staff to be informed and reminded about the new system in place for documenting the administration of anti-febrile medication and to ensure they get parents to sign the documentation.

##### Fire Safety:

Manager to continue to remind staff about fire safety. Manager to ensure that all staff re read all policies and procedures to refresh.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of infection control policy.

## Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of a number of staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

### 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 was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 02/05/2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in January 2023 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 16/01/23.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate confirming insurance for 35 children attending the service at any one time on a full day care basis up until 27/03/2024 was available.