

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL332			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Treehouse Childcare			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Allendale Walk, Allendale, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin			
<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 CR27			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Aileen O'Reilly			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	19/02/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	48	PM	45
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Y Kelly & AM Coyle			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors			
<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

Treehouse Childcare is an early years service established in 2005 which operates from a purpose built two storey building in North Dublin. The service provides a full day care, part-time and sessional service to preschool children from 1 to 5 years. The service operates from 7.30am-6.15pm, Monday to Friday. There are four rooms in the service as follows: Toddler Room cared for children aged between 1 years to 2 years, Preschool Room cared for children aged between 1 years 6 months to 2 years 6 months, ECCE Room 1 cared for children aged between 2 years 6 months to 3 years, ECCE Room 2 cared for children aged between 3 years to 4 years 6 months, with sanitary facilities, a kitchen, a staff room and an office. The outdoor play area is to the rear of the service. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and can cater for a maximum of 52 children.

### Staffing

The service employs 16 staff members, 13 of whom were present on the day of the inspection. A manager is employed in the service who coordinates the day-to-day operations of the service. One staff member is employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. A chef was engaged in cooking and catering duties. The registered provider was not present in the service during the inspection.

### Methodology

Tusla 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19(1)a, 23, 25 and 26; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler Room, Pre-school Room, ECCE Room 1 and ECCE Room 2.

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

(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 service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09:00am. The service manager arrived shortly after this and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files for 16 staff members including the person in charge were reviewed, and the following was recorded:

- (a) Twenty-five validated and written references were available from past employers.
- (b) Seven validated and written references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 16 staff members whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 15 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 15 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### 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 at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

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

- In the Toddler Room there were 9 children aged one year and four months to 1 year and eleven months being cared for by two staff members.
- In the Pre-school Room there were 10 children aged 2 years and 1 month to 2 years and 7 months being cared for by two staff members including 1 staff member employed as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In the ECCE Room 1 there were 13 children aged 2 years and four months to 3 years and nine months being cared for by three staff members.
- In the ECCE Room 2 there were 16 children aged 3 years and 2 months to 4 years and 7 months being cared for by four 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 and sign in records.

## 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 following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Children's meals were cooked by the chef following a three-week menu plan. Snack consisted of crackers with butter, cheese and ham and dinner consisted of couscous and vegetables. There were alternative food options available for children with additional dietary requirements or preferences.
- Children's water bottles were accessible to the children.

- The children in the Toddler room slept in cots in the sleep room and toddler room at their scheduled sleep time after they had their dinner. The children aged over 2 years in the service who required sleep slept on stackable beds set up in the Preschool room, ECCE room 1 and ECCE room 2 after dinner.
- There were cosy areas available for the children to relax in as required. Cosy areas were equipped with a mat, cushions and a selection of books for reading and relaxation.
- Children's independence was supported. Children were given responsibilities as 'helper of the day' such as giving out each child's placemat for dinner time.
- All of the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

### Supporting relationships

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service and the children were observed to be greeted enthusiastically on their arrival to the individual care rooms in the service.
- Staff soothed children under two years of age whilst going to sleep with relaxing music playing to provide a calm atmosphere.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were involved in transitions such as giving out each child's placemat for dinner time. The staff did a calming breathing exercise with the children before dinner time, 'Smell the flower, blow out the candle.' The staff read a story and sang songs with the children as they waited for dinner. In addition, the daily routine was displayed on the wall in the rooms and the routine was reflected in practice. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.
- Staff communicate with parents through use of a digital software application to share information about children's care needs.

### Physical and material environment:

- There was comfortable furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit when carrying out tabletop activities or for mealtimes.
- The care rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. In both the Preschool room and the ECCE room 1 areas of interest included home areas with extensive supportive equipment available to the children in

the ECCE room 2 including kitchen and dining equipment, a washing machine, dress up resources all of which supported the children’s imaginary play experiences. Transport toys, construction resources art materials, musical instruments along with a variety of small world, tabletop materials and reading resources were available in both care rooms. The children were observed to choose the play materials they wanted to play with and were supported by the staff members as needed.

- There were labels to denote interest areas which also promoted emergent literacy in the service.
- The Toddler room consisted of a Cosy Area where children could relax and read books, a kitchen area with kitchen and play materials, road mat with transportation toys, soft toys, plastic bricks, jigsaws and shape sorters to provide opportunities for children’s freely chosen play. A cosy corner with a mat, cushions and books were accessible to the children in the ECCE Room 1 along with a kitchen area with play materials, dolls, buggies and dress up for dramatic and imaginative play, arts and craft materials to support mark making opportunities and creativity for children. There was a construction area with road mat, transportation toys, plastic building bricks and photographs of world landmarks. There were tabletop materials including jigsaws and Montessori materials including wooden cylinders and cubes to support early numeracy learning opportunities and small world materials including dinosaurs, farm and wild animals. There were natural resources including pine cones.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the service. In the outdoor play area, there were slides, ride in and ride on cars, a scooter, a see-saw and tyres fixed into the ground, which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills.

### Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- Children’s learning and development is documented through observations of the children. Staff carry out short term and medium-term planning. There was a monthly medium-term plan which outlined the following: Valentines Day, Continent (Europe) and Spring. The services curriculum statement was displayed in the ECCE room 1.
- A staff member read a story to the children whilst they were sitting at the table before dinner time and involved the children in the story by asking them about their own experiences, “Have you ever been on a train?”

## Non-Compliance Information

### Physical and material environment:

1. There were no supporting play materials for the play kitchen that was available in the outdoor area to enable the children to extend their play.
2. The Family wall that was on display in the Pre-school room was positioned at too high a level for the children to view. This does not enable the children to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in the service and to maintain links with family and home.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

#### Physical and material environment:

##### Corrective Actions:

1. Supporting play materials were purchased for the outdoor kitchen.
2. The family wall in the Pre-school room has been lowered to the children's level.

##### Preventive Actions:

1. The person in charge reported that staff will remove the play equipment from the shed when the children are in the garden and ensure all equipment is returned to the shed at the end of the day.
2. The person in charge reported that staff will ensure that family wall pictures are at the children's level.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Physical and material environment:

1. Photographic evidence of play materials for the outdoor kitchen.
2. Photographic evidence of the family wall in the Pre-school room that has been lowered to the children's level.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

### 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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspectors observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with an impact absorbing surface.
- Daily risk assessments are displayed in rooms and were completed.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed washing hands before mealtimes, after outdoor play and after use of the toilet.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.
- Tables were cleaned before and after mealtimes using a disinfectant spray.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication policy was observed to be followed when a child attending the ECCE room 2 received medication during the course of the inspection.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Children's position, breathing and colour was recorded on an electronic application which was shared with parents and children were checked every 10 minutes.
- Fresh linen was put on stackable beds for each child to sleep on.
- The ambient temperature in the cot room and the Toddler room where children were sleeping was 20.3°C.

##### Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of emergency evacuation.
- There were fire drill procedures displayed throughout the service.

### 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 an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. There were 8 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR), 7 of which were present on the day of the inspection.
- (2)(a)(b) An adequately stocked first aid kit was observed in the service. This was stored out of reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

### 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 of fire drills were available on the premises with the last fire drill dated as having been carried out on the 07 February 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2024 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 10 February 2025.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the service.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

### Non-Compliance Information

(d) The registered provider did not ensure that the premises was being maintained in an appropriate condition as evidenced by the following:

1. The paint on the wall in the hallway outside of the Toddler room was peeling with plaster exposed underneath.
2. There were two holes in the wall that had peeling paint in the cosy area of the Pre-school room.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Actions:

(d)

1. The wall in the hallway outside of the Toddler Room was repainted.
2. The two holes in the wall in the cosy area of the Pre-school room were replastered and painted.

Preventive Actions:

The person in charge will ensure that any maintenance and repair issues are addressed in a timely manner.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(d)

1. Photographic evidence of the painted wall in the hallway outside of the Toddler Room has been submitted.
2. Photographic evidence of the replastering and painting of the holes in the wall in the Pre-school room has been submitted.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 29 have been addressed.