

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY089
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	An Chéad Eitilt
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Knockanavoddy, Furbo, Spiddal, Co. Galway
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 YF57
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Linda Richardson
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/07/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	48	PM	48
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F. Nic Dhonnacha and S Meehan
<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
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### Description of service

This private preschool offers the options of full day care and part time care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional programme from 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs, from Monday to Friday. The preschool caters for children aged between 3 months to 6 years of age. Additionally, a school age programme from 13.45hrs to 18.00hrs is offered. A child centred play based preschool curriculum focusing on Montessori and emerging interests is provided. The preschool service is located on its own grounds, in the village of Furbo, west County Galway. There are 6 playrooms, the Baby room, Wobbler room / Seomra corcra, Toddler room / Seomra buí, Junior Montessori / Seomra glas and School age room / Seomra bán all on the ground floor and the Senior Montessori / Seomra thuas staighre and school aged room are on the first floor. There is an outdoor sheltered unit called the Hill where the Seomra thuas staighre/ senior Montessori use two days a week for outdoor activities and learning. There are 2 designated sleep rooms, with 7 cots and 9 cots. Additionally, 28 stackable beds are available for older preschool children requiring sleep. The premises has its own kitchen, where children's main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a designated dining room adjacent to the kitchen used by the children. The preschool children have access to various secured outdoor play areas at the rear and side of the premises, on the Hill, including an all-weather sheltered area for children's play activities, fresh air, and exploration.

### Staffing

The registered provider is on the premises daily. There are a total of 18 staff currently working in the premises. There is a named person in charge and there is a named designated deputy. Fourteen staff hold 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. There is a designated administrator, and a designated auxiliary staff member. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education.

On the day of inspection, there were 9 staff working directly with the preschool children this included the registered provider and person in charge. There was 2 staff members working with the school aged children. In addition, there was a student over the age of 18 years who was supervised at all times while caring for the children. The person in charge was the designated chef preparing, cooking, serving children's meals and snacks. In addition, the person in charge assisted with the administration parts of the inspection and provided childcare relief when necessary.

## 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 premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,18,19, 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 15,( Records of a Pre-School Child).

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 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 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times when the pre-school children were present.
- (2) All staff and student files were reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (a)&(b) Thirty-six written validated references, available on file for the eighteen adults were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of the eighteen adults.
- (d) Four adults who lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years had the required police vetting available on file.
- (4) Fourteen adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for these staff members.

### 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection, there were 48 preschool children present.

- 5 children were aged 9 months to 1 year,
- 10 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 6 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 27 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

There were 9 staff directly caring for these children, including the registered provider.

Additionally, the person in charge assisted with the inspection process, provided childcare relief, and prepared, cooked the main meals and snacks in the service.

In addition, there was a student over the age of 18 years on a childcare placement, who was supervised when interacting with the children.

There was a school aged programme with 10 children and 2 staff members designated to their care.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

*(a) the name and date of birth of the child;*

*(b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*

*(c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*

*(d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*

*(e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*

*(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*

*(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

*(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*

*(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 20 of 64 enrolment forms for children that are currently attending were reviewed by the inspectors. The details relating to (1) (a) to (i) were documented on each record.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

*A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

A copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the notice board and available for parents, guardians, employees, unpaid workers, contractors, and authorised persons.

### 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

##### Basic Needs

(1)(a)(b)

Healthy eating was promoted within the service and a healthy eating policy was available for review on request.

Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times, but there was flexibility.

The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff. At approx. 10.30hrs, the children had their snacks provided by the preschool which included yoghurt with apple, banana, pear fruit pieces.

At 13.00hrs, all children attending had Sheppard's pie and mixed vegetables for dinner. Children had the opportunity for seconds if desired. Water was served with the main meal.

There were designated fridges for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from the children's bags.

The staff encouraged and supported the children to be independent.

The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.

Documentary evidence indicated that the children were encouraged to try different food tastes, textures, colours, and so forth.

The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet.

Twenty children wore a nappy on the day of inspection and had their nappies changed in a timely manner in the three nappy changing areas.

Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

All the children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment, both indoors and outdoors.

There was a cosy area within each of the playrooms with child sized couches, matting and cushions provided which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished. Rest / quiet areas were provided in the playrooms in the form of couches, cushions and matting to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.

There was two designated sleep rooms with sixteen cots in total, for younger children's sleep provision. The older children had access to stackable beds for their rest, when required and the Seomra Buí was converted for sleep provision after dinner.

The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children in each playroom.

The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child's choices, age and stage of development.

The service supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with siblings, peers, and other children, by providing opportunities for small and large group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging.

Staff responded to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cried or became upset.

On the days of inspection, the children from The Baby room were observed playing with sensory toys and listening to stories. The children in the Seomra Corca (Wobblers) were observed singing action songs, while the children in the Seomra Buí (Toddlers) and Seomra Glas (Junior Montessori) were observed at circle time listening to stories, singing action songs, colouring pictures, building blocks and playing matching games.

The older children in the Seomra Thuas Staighre (Senior Montessori) were observed playing imaginative games with dolls houses, costumes, building tracks and blocks, while others played in the playhouse or sat and looked at books. All children had the opportunity to play outdoors on the day of inspection. The children were observed playing on the activity centre, sliding on the slide, pedalling tricycles, jumping chasing, and kicking ball. While other children and staff were observed rescuing a wild hedgehog that was trapped in the fence and they released it back into the wild. The children watched with great excitement, discussions and fun.

On speaking with staff, the inspectors were informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's interests, preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times or by phone calls. Information about the service and general information was displayed on the notice board, inside the main door.

The children's art and craft materials were collated into clip folders and given to parents and guardians on a seasonal basis.

The outdoor play areas to the rear, side and on the Hill of the premises were sufficiently spacious to accommodate the numbers of children attending the service. The outdoor play environment provided activities and opportunities for fresh air, exercise, and discovery.

### 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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. The service provided evidence that 5 staff were trained in first aid for children and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) The service had 1 large first aid box with content items in date. It was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the main office on the ground floor.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

*A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-  
any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*

*the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting 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) Written records of fire drills were kept in relation to any fire drills that took place in the premises.

Records indicated the last fire drill record was dated on 22/06/2023.

(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with  
the last annual service check dated 8/07/2023.

The last annual service date for the smoke and fire detection alarm system recorded was 5/07/2023.

(4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the  
premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance with an expiry date 27/03/2024 for a full day care service with 85 children  
and included the following -

public liability insurance.

insurance against fire and theft.

buildings insurance.

insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.