

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015GY207 | | | | |
| Name of Service: | Over the Rainbow | | | | |
| Address of Service: | 276 Palace Fields, Tuam, Co. Galway | | | | |
| Eircode: | H54 HD76 | | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Judy O'Connor | | | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 28/04/2025 | | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>7</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table> | AM | 7 | PM | N/A |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | <p>Tusla Early Years Inspector, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Children & Family Agency, H.R Building, Merlin Park, Galway.</p> | | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | E. Friel | | | | |
| Title: | Early Years Inspector | | | | |

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not Applicable

Description of service

Over the Rainbow is a private, sessional, early years care and education service operating from its current location since 2003. While registered to accommodate children aged from 2 – 6 years, the service currently caters for children aged from 2 years 6 months to 6 years of age. The Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in the morning from 08:45 to 12:15, school term time only. A school age care service is available from 13:30 to 18:00.

The service is located within a residential housing estate in Tuam, county Galway. The service consists of a care room which is located on the ground floor of the registered provider's private home. There are children and adult's sanitary facilities and a kitchen available. A secure outdoor play area is accessible at the back of the service.

Staffing

There are three adults employed in the service, two of whom were working directly with the children. The registered provider was on the premises and facilitated with the administration aspects of the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation

- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(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 register provider was the designated person in charge and the manager was available to deputise, as required.

(b) The staff roster indicated that the three adults were on the premises while the pre-school children were present in the service.

(c) There was a clear management structure with pictures visible in the reception area of the service. In conversation, staff stated they were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Three recruitment files were reviewed:

(a) Five of six required validated references were from past employers.

(b) The remaining one of six validated references required was from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all three adults, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Curricula vitae indicated that no police vetting was required, as none of the adults had lived outside of Ireland

as adults for six months or longer.

- (4) There was evidence that two of three adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework. A letter of eligibility to practice had been issued for the third adult whose qualifications had been assessed 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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that on the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the service.
- (3) There were two staff members working directly with seven children on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the administration of the paperwork required for the inspection process.

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.

service containing the particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) All ten records of the pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. The following particulars were found to be compliant; (1) (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The children's pre-school records were reviewed by the inspector on the premises on the morning of inspection.

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

Basic Needs:

- Staff stated a rolling snack was in operation in the service. Food provided by the parents/guardians was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included berried fruits, yogurt and filled sandwiches. Plates were provided for snacks and additional food was available in the event a child was hungry or did not like their snack.
- Individual water bottles were accessible from a basket which the children could easily reach. They were observed in use in the indoor and outdoor play areas. A separate jug of water was available in the event children's bottles required refilling or a child did not bring a bottle.

- Children’s nappies were changed in line with the service’s nappy changing procedure. Staff were observed changing nappies as and when required. The adults were observed wearing single use aprons and disposable gloves for each nappy change.
- Child friendly posters of handwashing were displayed in the children’s sanitary area which demonstrated the steps for hygienic hand washing.
- Children were observed relaxing in the cosy rest/quiet area, which was located away from noisy activities. The area was clearly defined with a wooden frame in the shape of a house with windows consisting of two vinyl sofas, cushions and blankets. A child was observed watching the fish in the tall lava lamp in the area while other children chose age and stage appropriate books to read while sitting in the area.

Supporting children’s relationships:

- Staff stated a key-person system was in place in the service with named a staff member assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with a designated group of children and their parents.
- Interactions between the staff and the children were warm and caring. Staff were observed getting down to the children’s level, listening to their questions and comments and responding appropriately.
- Staff stated they held daily informal meetings after the session was finished. Examples of minutes of monthly staff meetings furnished to the inspector included topics such as settling-in-strategies, organising community visits, curriculum planning and play equipment.
- Staff stated they use various methods of communication with parents/guardians including verbally at drop off and collection, phone in the event of an emergency and a term time newsletter, an example of which was furnished to the inspector.
- The adults in the service-maintained relationships with the local community. The inspector was furnished with photographs of outings to community services including the fire and Garda stations.

Physical and material environment:

- The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas which enhanced the learning needs of children across all developmental areas. Examples included a home corner/dressing up, puzzle area, arts and crafts, water and sand troughs.
- Equipment and toys were laid out in baskets on low-level shelving which encouraged choice and promoted independence, which the children were observed exercising throughout the morning. Examples

included play figures, dinosaurs, vehicles, construction materials, musical instruments and natural materials of pinecones and wooden circles.

- A print rich environment was visible with materials, resources and children’s belongings labelled with corresponding photographs.
- The outdoor play area offered an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed area which provided opportunities for the children to practice their gross motor skills of swinging, climbing, sliding and running. Additional equipment was available from a storage box with scooters, trikes and bikes.

Programme of activities:

- Ongoing observations, linked to the early childhood curriculum framework and the national quality framework, were documented for each child which helped create a complete, well-rounded picture of each child’s progress and development.
- Children’s language development was supported through one to one and group discussions which were observed during the inspection.

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 main entrance door of the service was operated with a thumb twist cylinder and a safety device. On arrival the manager was greeting children at the main entrance, all these measures ensured that no unauthorised adult could enter the service or that a child could leave the service unsupervised.
- Window openings in the care room were restricted with safety devices preventing children from exiting or falling.
- Blind cords in the care room were secured out of reach of the children.
- All toys and play equipment in the care room and outdoor area appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Printer cables were inaccessible to the children preventing accidents from occurring.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen, out of reach of the children.

- The perimeter of the outdoor play area, at the back of the service, was secured with a combination of a high block wall and concrete panelling. The high wooden entrance door to the outdoor area was secured with a sliding bolt and a latch ensuring the children could not leave the area unsupervised or that unauthorised adults could enter the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning records were noted to be completed and up to date.
- A tissue station was observed in operation with staff ensuring children carried out handwashing after blowing their nose.
- The hand basin in use in the children's sanitary area was fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, 32°C, dispensing soap, paper towels and a bin for the disposal of paper waste.
- Children's belongings were stored on individually named hooks, and lunch bags were stored on a trolley in the reception area away from the floor area.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in a fridge, ensuring the food did not spoil.
- Hygienic hand washing by the children was observed before and after snacks, coming in from outdoor play and after toileting.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was available. It was noted to be stored in a cupboard in the kitchen, out of reach of the children. The expiry date was noted as April 2025.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping in the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were unobstructed allowing for the quick evacuation of children and staff in the event of fire or emergency.
- A fire extinguisher, in the care room, was secured by brackets to the wall.

Outing:

- The service was insured for outings.
- Signed consent from parents/guardians was available for trips which had taken place. Examples of which included trips to the local fire and Garda stations.
- As per the outing policy the service made sure that an adult with FAR training was available while the children were on the outings.

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 made sure that an adult with first aid responder training was available while the pre-school children were in the service. Certificates were on file to evidence that all three adults were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR).

(2)

(a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was stored within easy reach of the adults in the care room near the window. It was available while the pre-school children were present in the service.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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 the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date

recorded was noted as 8 April 2025 with previous monthly drills recorded as 03 March 2025 and 4 February 2025.

(b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. Both certificates were dated October 2024.

(2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

(4) The fire actions to be followed in the event of an emergency were displayed on the wall at the fire exit door in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were available in the reception area of the service which included the following details;

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of Pre-school children for whom the service is insured: 20
- The type of service: Sessional
- Expiry date: 27 March 2026.