

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY245
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Name of Service:	Stepping Stones, Tierneevin Child Care Service
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Address of Service:	Tierneevin N.S., Tierneevin, Gort, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 F8D2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Beakey
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly.
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).

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Description of service

This part-time and sessional service opened in 2013 and offers a service to children aged from 3 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 14.00. The service is in a rural area 6km from Gort, Co Galway. It is situated in a modular building on the grounds of a Tierneevin National School. It consists of one playroom with sanitary accommodation for both adults and children. The outdoor play area is located towards the front and rear of the service. This service was also registered to cater for school aged children.

Staffing

The registered provider was on the premises on the day of the inspection. A total of three adults were working with the pre-school children. On the day of inspection there was one student in transition year placement and four other staff members that work only in the school aged service.

Methodology

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

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

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

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

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-

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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.*

(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.

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was in charge and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there were three staff working in the preschool, which included the registered provider and three staff members that worked only with the school aged service. On the day of inspection there was one student on work experience for college placement and one student on transition year school placement. The student on work experience placement also worked in the school aged service.

These eight files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) Of the required 16 written and appropriately validated references, 12 of these references were from a previous employer.

(b) Of the required 16 written and appropriately validated references, 4 of these references were from a reputable source other than the previous employer.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting for staff members every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required as the adults working in the service had not lived for a period longer than six consecutive months outside the jurisdiction.

(4) All adults working directly with the preschool children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the following care rooms were in operation.
- At 10.15:
- Playroom- there were 3 adults working with 13 preschool children aged between 2 year and 7 months and 5 years 6 months.

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:

- The older children were independent with their toileting needs. However, on occasion some children needed a gentle reminder from staff. The sanitary areas were located adjacent to the playroom. The staff could easily help and supervise the children if required.
- Children washed their hands prior to lunchtime and after using the toilet. Hand washing took place on a number of occasions during the inspection.

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- Mealtimes was a social event; the children ate their snacks at low level tables. Two children were given various tasks which included taking the children's lunches from a trolley and giving them around to each child. This was also linked with the theme of the week, which was "Transport", linked to the emergent interest of the child, which arose from one child going on holidays. The lunch trolley was introduced so the children could role play the air stewards on a plane. The staff sat with the children speaking and interacting in a positive manner with the children.
- The children were not rushed when they were having their snack. When they were finished, the children were observed tidying up their lunch bags.
- Children got the opportunity to move freely around the playroom and they played in the outdoor play areas each day. On the day of inspection, the children spent time in the outdoor section to rear of the premises.
- The staff used positive approaches when dealing with minor issues that arose during the sessions from sharing of toys to where they sat at the dinner table.
- Children were appointed to various jobs throughout the session. Each job was allocated to various children. A poster with the children's photographs and the task involved were on displayed for the children to see.

Outdoor Play Area:

- The outdoor play area had a selection of areas to explore and use such as slides, climbing frames, timber house and had a range of toys and equipment suitable for use outdoors.
- The children also have use of the extensive outdoor/sports play area that was used by the national school children, when the school aged children weren't using them.

Indoor Play Area:

- The play area was divided into defined areas offering different experiences for the children. The playrooms were bright and well laid out with a variety of distinct interest areas. Wall spaces were effectively used to display photographs of the children and their families, art works and posters relating to the current curricular plan.
- All of the play and educational resources were accessible to children on open shelving at their height. The children were observed on various occasion taking toys and puzzles off the shelves playing with them and

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before playing with a different toy or puzzle they returned the first toy to where they got it with any prompts or direction from the staff members.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

- (1) Each child attending the service was checked in and out by a staff member. A record of each child's attendance detailing the arrival and departure time of each child was maintained daily. This record was available for inspection.
- (3)(a) A register of people entering the premises other than those outlined above in (3)(a) was available for inspection. The following information was recorded for each person as outlined above.
 - (c) The date
 - (d) The person's name, and contact details
 - (e) The reason for entry
- (b) A daily register of visitors to the service was maintained.