

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KE179
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Acres of Fun Pre-school
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Taghadoe, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	W23 NX79
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Theresa Maughan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	15/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Carty
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

Acres of Fun is a sessional service located in a rural setting near Maynooth, Co Kildare. The service operates two sessional services Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.45pm to 3.45pm for 38 weeks of the year.

There is one care room located in an extension to the registered providers domestic dwelling.

There is a large multi-surface outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

The service offers a play-based curriculum to the children aged between 2 to 6 years.

### Staffing

There were three adults working in the service directly with the children including the registered provider. All staff held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 – Staffing levels

Regulation 15 – Record of a preschool child

Regulation 16 – Information and Records

Regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and Development of the child

Regulation 23 - Safety

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulations 15 and 16.

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

*(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

The recruitment records of all staff employed in the service were reviewed.

(2) (a) Six past employer references were available in respect of the adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of 6 months or more.

(4) All adults had a required qualification at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children throughout the inspection.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were always maintained during the inspection. Three adults facilitated the programme of care and education for thirteen pre-school children.

## 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 seven records were reviewed by the inspector. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above Regulation for all of the records reviewed.

### 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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

- (h) A written record was available detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
- (i) A staffing roster was available in the service on the day of inspection.
- (k) A sample of five accident and incident records were reviewed and were signed by staff and parents and completed appropriately.

### 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 registered provider and staff of the service had ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was being facilitated as observed by the following:

The parents and guardians of the children provided all snacks for the children which included a variety of foods including sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts.

Care practices observed on the day of inspection were appropriate and suitable to the age and the needs of the children in attendance. The atmosphere in the care room was calm, friendly and supportive. The staff

demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children by using soft vocal tones, listening attentively and offering praise and encouragement.

The children were encouraged to develop independent life skills such as using the toilet, washing their hands, wiping their own noses, and taking care of their belongings. Staff displayed a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Interactions observed throughout the inspection between staff and children were warm with staff observed supporting children in their play. Staff made themselves available to the children to scaffold and extend learning as well as be available should a child require assistance.

The care room was bright, spacious and contained a varied provisions for play and learning. There were materials and equipment suitable for the age range and number of children attending the service. There were low level shelving units so that the children could easily access the materials and there were sufficient child sized tables and chairs for the number of children attending. The shelving contained activities including a variety of table top activities, puzzles, art and construction activities which promoted choice and independence. The care room had defined areas of interest including a home corner, and a rest area with books.

There was a large outdoor area to the rear of the building which contained four separate areas for play including a grassed area with planting materials, a pebbled area for construction, a grassed area with football nets and an area with a swing set and ride on toys. A covered area with tables and chairs and a mud kitchen was also available to the children in attendance.

## 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

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children and staff in attendance as demonstrated below:

#### General Safety:

Access to the service was secure ensuring no unauthorised access to or from the building. Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children. Heavy furniture was secured and cables were out of reach of children.

#### Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled warm water was available to the children along with liquid soap and paper towels. Pedal bins were available throughout the service. The service was maintained in a clean condition.

#### Fire Safety:

All emergency exits were kept clear of obstruction and regular monthly fire drills took place.