

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK024		
Name of Service:	Enable Ireland Specialised Early Years Service.		
Address of Service:	The O'Neill Centre, St Joseph's Road, Kilkenny.		
Eircode:	R95 K260		
Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Rudkins		
Service type:	Part Time		
Date(s) of Inspection:	13/03/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM 10
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate. Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Ann Spain		
Title:	Registration Support Manager.		

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

Enable Ireland Specialised Early Years Service is funded by the Health Service Executive to provide care and developmental services to children with additional needs from 1 year to 18 years. The early years service cares for children between the hours of 10.00am and 2.30pm and incorporates therapy and programmes of activities in the playrooms in the service. Children currently in attendance in the early years' service are in the age range 2 to 6 years and attend the service for a maximum of two days a week. Children are also supported to attend local mainstream preschools. The purpose-built service open since 1981 is located in Kilkenny city. Rooms available include a reception area, three playrooms, a soft playroom, a sensory room, a hydro-therapy pool room, sanitary accommodation for children and staff, an office, a laundry room and a staff kitchen. Outdoor play areas are provided directly outside of the playrooms and at the side of the premises. Additional rooms in the single storey premises are used by physiotherapy, speech therapy, psychology, family support services and administration offices. Parking is available at the front of the building. The registered provider works in the centre in a management capacity.

Staffing

The three playrooms in the service are staffed by a registered nurse for intellectual disability and by childcare professionals. Ten of the thirteen staff employed to work directly with the children were present on the day of inspection. Childcare qualifications of staff varied from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 to level 8. Experience in childcare varied from 1 to 30 years. A bus driver was also employed in the service to transport children to and from their homes to the centre.

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 management and staff, facilities for rest and play, food and drink, safety and premises. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 20 Facilities for rest and play, 22 Food and drink, 25 First aid, 26 Fire safety measures and 29 Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection included all rooms in the service.

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*

(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 had both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise as required work directly in the service and were present on the day of inspection. Both staff members were supernumerary to the staff complement working directly with the children cared for in the playrooms. The person in charge was available to provide relief cover in the playrooms as required.

Four of the thirteen staff working directly with the children were employed since the last inspection of the service.

- (2)(a) Two validated references from past employers were on file in respect of six staff members working in the playrooms. One validated reference was available from a past employer in respect of five staff working in the playrooms.
- (b) Two validated references from sources other than past employers were available in respect of two staff members. A second validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of five staff working in the service.
- (c) A vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau was on file in respect of all childcare staff working in the service.
- (d) A police clearance was on file in respect of one staff member who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Certification was available to confirm that staff working in the service had childcare qualifications varying from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) levels 5 to level 8. There was also evidence to confirm that staff had engaged in continuous professional development which included certified special needs training.

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) An adequate number of staff worked directly with the children in each of the three playrooms on the day of inspection.
- (2) Three staff cared for three children in “Lady Birds” on the day of inspection. The maximum number of children registered to attend on any one day was five children with three staff members present.

Four staff members cared for four children in “Teddy Bears” on the day of inspection. The maximum number of children registered to attend on any one day was five with four staff members present.

Three staff members were present in “Busy Bees” with three children on the day of inspection. The maximum number of children cared for in the room was five with three staff members always present.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

- (a) a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service offered children a play-based programme of activities to compliment the children’s individual therapy programmes. The inspector was informed that parents were met with, to decide on the children’s needs and goals for each year in the service. Staff were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with the children and to communicate with the children at individual child’s level.

Children in attendance in “Teddy Bears” were aged four to six years. Play equipment provided in the room included a good supply of arts and crafts materials. Phones and computers were provided for pretend play. Musical instruments were provided. Miniature animals and toys for counting, sorting, and building were available. A farm, dolls house and utensils to use for baking and cooking were provided. Dress up clothing was observed. Low level seating was provided and toys for tabletop activities included picture cards, bricks and blocks of different sizes and dimensions and interlocking stick together toys.

Children in attendance in “Lady Birds” were in the age range of two years and six months to five years. Areas of interest provided in the room included the farm, the vet station, a doctors set and toys on wheels including cars and buses. The building area was equipped with tools, hard hats, and high visibility jackets.

A train set was provided with both building and stackable blocks. Dolls and dolls clothing were provided. The kitchen was equipped with food, a sink, utensils and miniature sweeping brushes and dust pans. Toys for tabletop activities included shapes, puzzles, large and small pegs, jigsaws, and magnetic toys.

Children in attendance in “Busy Bees” were in the age range three years and six months to four years. Toys and play equipment observed on the day of inspection included wall mounted black boards, colours, paint, shapes and paper for arts and crafts activities. Blocks and bricks and stacking toys were provided for floor play. Jigsaws, flash cards, matching games and puzzles were provided for tabletop activities. A tea set was provided in the kitchen area. Soft toys and miniature toys to wheel along were stored in open boxes.

All three playrooms in the service had a reserve of play and learning resources in storage boxes to support the children’s emerging interests throughout the year in the service. Children’s bags were used to store individual toys and play equipment used at home and in the service to support individual programmes incorporating therapy and play in both settings.

In addition, the “Rompa Room” offered an additional area outside of the playrooms for energetic play and physical movement. The floor and walls in the room were provided with a soft washable foam-covered finish. A ball pool was provided and soft stairs and tunnels for children to move and climb on. A swing was mounted in the room. Wall features in the room included musical insets, turning, twisting, and interconnecting toys, a clock, and switches to turn on and off. Zipping, closing, and buttoning toys were also observed in the room. It was indicated on the day of inspection that the hydrotherapy pool in the service was not in use and was awaiting repair works.

(b) The sensory room in the service offered a suitable area for children’s needs for comfort, rest, and relaxation. Soft low-level couches, stools and toys were provided as well as books to encourage rest and relaxation as required in an area outside of the playrooms.

(3)(a) Outdoor play areas were provided directly off all playrooms in the service and were secured by concrete walls and the back wall of the building to guard against unauthorised to the back of the premises and outdoor play areas. The outdoor play area off “Lady Birds” was provided with a smooth tarmac ground surface. Toys and play equipment in the outdoor play area included a mud kitchen with pots and pans and low-level stools to sit on. A playhouse, planting box and a water feature secured to the wall, which included pipes and funnels were also observed in this area. The outdoor play area off “Teddy Bears” had a grass surface, which contained a slide, climbing frame , toys on wheels and a planting box for outdoor play. The outdoor play area off “Busy Bees” had a smooth concrete surface. Blackboards were wall mounted in this area.

A play tunnel, sand and water trays, a kitchen and chimes hanging from a tree were observed. A picnic table and bench were provided for children to sit outdoors for play activities and for break times.

An additional play area was provided at the side of the premises for use by all children in the service. This area had a combination of an all-weather surface and a grass surface area, and a timber gate allowed access from the play areas outside of the playrooms. This area was secured by heavy duty plastic fencing, concrete walls, and the side wall of the building. Play equipment provided included swings, a climbing frame, and slides. Tyres were provided for climbing and balancing play. A storage shed housed toys after use and during inclement weather conditions.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A refrigerator was provided in the portacabin leading to the staff kitchen area for storage of perishable foods, drinks and snacks as provided by parents and guardians of children in attendance in the service. A sink was available in the kitchen to assist with wash up of delph, cups and cutlery after snack times.

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.
- (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 was maintained of fire drills conducted on the premises and it was observed that the last monthly fire drill was recorded on the 6 March 2023.
- (b) The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment which was located at both exit doors off the premises, in the reception area and in the kitchen indicated that an annual service was conducted 3 March 2023. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system indicated that the last service was conducted on 18 January 2023.
- (4) The fire and evacuation procedure for the service was wall mounted in all playrooms in the service. A fire assembly point was located on the garage wall at the front of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance cover for the service was part of a national insurance policy for all Enable Ireland Disability Services CLG. Insurance was valid up until 1 April 2023 and included cover for the Early Years Service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The premises was well maintained on the day of inspection with no evidence of dampness or mould growth on internal walls and ceilings. Windows and doors appeared to be both water and weather tight when closed.
- (b) The glass panel doors leading to the entrance to the service allowed easy visibility off all approaching the service. A smooth concrete ramped area led to the entrance door to the service. The reception area inside the entrance door was maned to guard against unauthorised access to the building. A high-level door release switch was provided on the door leading from the hallway off the three playrooms to the reception area to guard against unsupervised exit by children from the service. Cleaning agents and chemicals were stored on high level shelves in the playrooms and in locked presses under the sinks in the rooms. The laundry room provided a suitable location for a backup storage supply of cleaning agents, chemicals, and cleaning equipment in an area outside of the playrooms.
- (c) Openable windows were provided in the playrooms and sanitary accommodation to ensure good ventilation directly from outside and natural day light into the rooms occupied by the children. The ceiling fluorescent light fittings throughout the service were covered with shatter proof diffusers. The under-floor heating system insured a comfortable room temperature between 18-22°C in all playrooms in use in the service.
- (d) The rooms, furniture, play, and work equipment were clean and on the day of inspection. The reserve stock of toys and play equipment in the offices off each of the playrooms allowed toys to be cleaned and put away for rotation in the service. The heavy-duty floor lino throughout the rooms and hallways in the service was well fitted and maintained on the day of inspection. The offices in the service provided a suitable location for the storage of staff coats and personal belongings in areas outside of the playrooms. Hooks positioned off the floor and high-level shelving were provided to store children’s coats, bags, and spare clothing in the playrooms. The service had engaged an outside cleaning company to assist with cleaning of sanitary accommodation, hallways, and communal areas in the premises. The shed at the front of the building provided a suitable location for the storage

of waste and refuse outside of the rooms in the service. A laundry room was available to assist with laundry of lined and items including soft toys in the service.

(e) A bathroom was provided with direct access from two of the playrooms in the service as well as from the hallway. Three low level toilets and three wash hand basins plumbed with a thermostatically controlled supply of hot and cold-water supply were provided for use by children in the service. A nappy changing station and sluice sink was also provided in this area. A high/low wash hand basin was provided to assist children in wheelchairs with hand washing. Liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bin were provided adjacent to the wash hand basins. Staff sanitary accommodation was provided at both ends of the corridor in the service and a disability access toilet and wash hand basin were provided close to the reception areas. Toilet areas were provided with smooth washable wall and floor tiled finishes and openable windows for ventilation purposes.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) There were missing wall and floor tiles under the high/low wash hand basin in the children's bathroom following installation which require replacing.

Corrective and preventive Action submitted by the registered provider

(d) The person in charge of the service submitted written confirmation and picture evidence on the 27 March 2023 confirming that all missing wall and floor tiles in the children's bathroom were replaced.

Summary Comment

(d) The evidence submitted meets the requirements of regulation 29(d) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.