

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK024
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Name of Service:	Enable Ireland Specialised Early Years Service
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Address of Service:	The O'Neill Centre, St Josephs Road, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 K260
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Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Rudkins
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	12/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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

Enabled Ireland Specialised Early Years Service is a registered early years service funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to provide a care and educational programme for children aged 1 to 6 years who are diagnosed with additional physical and intellectual needs. Children currently attending the service are aged between 3 and 6 years and attend the service for various programmes ranging from periods of 2 to 4.5 hours a day, for 2 to 3 days a week per child, with children and families supported to attend appropriate mainstream early years services on the week days that they are not attending the Enable Ireland service.

The purpose-built premises has two wings with the early years service operating from the right wing and the community disability network team located in the opposite wing of the premises.

Facilities provided in the early years service includes a reception area, three classrooms- the Busy Bees, Teddy Bears and Ladybirds classrooms, a hydrotherapy unit, soft playroom, sensory room, ergonomic specialised bathroom facilities, staff room facilities and office rooms.

A spacious carpark is provided at the front of the premises with outdoor play areas provided for all classrooms, with direct access to the outdoor areas from each classroom.

Staffing

There are 17 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider, a receptionist, two driver/maintenance personnel, cleaner, therapy pool assistant and 11 staff who as part of their role in the service are employed to care for and work directly with the children attending the service. Each classroom has one staff member who is a registered intellectual disability nurse while all other staff present held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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

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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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 15- Records of Preschool Children,

Regulation 16 -Records in Relation to Pre-School Service,

Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

Regulation 24-Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the classrooms.

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.

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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 has a named person in charge, and a named person who can deputise as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the person in charge was onsite with the deputy person in charge also present.

(2) Staff files for 17 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each staff member, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for each of the 17 staff members including the registered provider. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosure certificates were on file for five staff members employed in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

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(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members caring for and working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the three preschool classrooms that were in operation during the inspection.

Busy Bees Classroom –There were 3 staff members directly caring for 3 children aged 3 to 4.5 years of age throughout the inspection.

Teddy Bears Classroom–There were 5 staff members directly caring for 5 children aged 4 to 5 years throughout the inspection.

Ladybirds Classroom–There were 4 staff members directly caring for 4 children aged 3 to 5 years throughout the inspection.

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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) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 registration records of pre-school children attending the service, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each child.

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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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) On review of documents available on file in the service, the inspector was assured that a record was maintained in writing by the registered provider of the information required in elements (a) to (k).

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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 service had an automated security entrance door which was activated by the receptionist, on authorisation to enter. Children attending could not exit their assigned classroom unsupervised and visitors could only enter the premises once authorised by the staff. The outdoor play areas were secured on the perimeter by a high concrete wall and internally securely divided by child height fencing.

Each classroom had a designated office area inaccessible to the children which stored all medications in a secure medicine cabinet.

No cleaning materials or equipment were observed to be accessible to the children; secure storage was provided for the safe storage of all cleaning materials and equipment.

Infection Control:

Specialised ergonomic toilet and nappy changing facilities were provided in the service to meet the needs of all the children attending the service. Child height toilets and handwash basins, specialised high- low nappy changing tables and suitably designed toilet training units were all supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access or be supported to access and use.

Staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, after nappy-changing, after messy and outdoor play, and before snack times.

Daily cleaning schedules of the classrooms, general service areas and outdoor play areas were observed to be carried out and documented daily.

Administration of Medication:

The staff were well informed of the procedures to be followed in administering any type of medication to a child, in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Specific child centred plans were available for inspection for each child who may require emergency medication in the event of a medical emergency or for any prescribed medications.

A review of a sample of ten administration of medication records demonstrated that administration of medication procedures was followed in line with the service's administration of medication policy. Individual children's medications were stored safely and securely in a designated medication cabinet within the office of each

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classroom. Any medications requiring transport in and out of the service with individual children were checked and recorded daily.

Safe Sleep:

As children attended the early years service for a maximum of up to 4.5 hours, they did not generally sleep while there. Stackable beds were readily available should a child want to sleep with regular ten-minute checks carried out on any sleeping child's position, breathing and colour.

The staff in the service informed the inspector that if a child was observed to become unusually sleepy during their time in the service, the child's parents are contacted to collect the child.

Outing:

An appropriate outings policy was available in the service to ensure the safe transport of children in and out of the service.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) The staff demonstrated to the inspector that each child's daily attendance and departure times were recorded. On review of the attendance records the number of children present in the three classrooms correlated with the attendance records maintained by the staff in each.

(3)(a) The inspector observed that no person other than a child attending the service, a parent/ guardian dropping or collecting a child, an employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises without authorisation by staff.

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(b) The inspector observed that a daily record of any visitors was maintained and detailed the name, contact details, purpose of visit and times of entry and exit. The inspector was required to record their details in the record book in the reception area upon arriving at the service.

(4) The inspector observed that a visitor record had been maintained for greater than one year prior to the date of inspection.

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

There were nine staff members with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training. At all times while the service was operating, there was at least six staff members with FAR training present. This was reflected in the staff roster reviewed by the inspector on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a designated first aid box located in each of the three classrooms which was easily accessed and always available.

The first aid contents were adequate, and records demonstrated that the first aid contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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) The following fire safety records were maintained:
- (a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 16 April 2026.
 - (b) A written record was maintained of the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and the smoke alarm system in the service. The last maintenance check of fire-fighting equipment and the fire alarm system was recorded as having taken place on the 11 March 2026.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (3) The designated person in charge demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the main entrance hall and in each of the three classrooms.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate displaying adequate insurance for the specialised Enable Ireland Disability service was available demonstrating insurance cover from 31 March 2026 to the 01 April 2027.