

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK037		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Hugginstown Pre-School		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Lismatigue, Hugginstown, Co. Kilkenny		
<b>Eircode:</b>	R95 RX04		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Valerie Norris		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	30/01/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital Ferrybank, Wexford		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

This sessional service is located in a rural setting in Co Kilkenny. The service is registered to provide a sessional service to children aged 2 to 6 years old. The service is open from Monday to Friday 09:30 to 13:00 hours. The service is operated from the first floor of the registered provider's home. The service consists of a preschool room, toilets, an entrance hallway and corridor and a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There were two staff employed in the service. Both staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications 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

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.

The inspection focused on the following regulations:

- Regulation 9 management and recruitment,
- Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child,
- Regulation 11 staffing levels,
- Regulation 17 Information for parents,

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,  
Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child,  
Regulation 26 fire Safety,  
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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)(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were two staff employed in the service. Both staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were four required written references available on file for both staff.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for the 2 staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for the 2 staff employed in the service.

(d)  
Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)  
All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework

### 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)  
There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children during the period of inspection.

(2)  
At 11:00  
There were 16 children aged between 2 and 6 in the care of two staff.

## 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

A sample of children’s enrolment forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

#### Compliance Information

There was a parent handbook for parents who were enrolling their children in the service. The registered provider also facilitated an open day for parents prior to children starting in the service in order to share information and help the children become accustomed to the service. The information handbook provided for parents contained an outline of the curriculum, the hours of operation, contact details and the facilities available within the service.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The preschool room was resourced with a variety of stimulating toys and equipment. The registered provider was involved with a biodiversity programme during this term in the service. There was a glass box situated at the children’s eye level in the preschool room. This box had a mixture of soil and garden leaves which children could see how compost was made to “feed the soil”. There was a small basin which had been buried in the garden. Children explained to the inspector that they were waiting for tadpoles to emerge. There was a large home corner which held a kitchen and a selection of empty household containers for children to use to play.

There was a fairy tree with miniature fairies around the base on a table accessible to the children. The inspector noted it was a delicate structure and could break easily. Staff who spoke to the inspector explained the children were encouraged to take great care with the installation which staff said encouraged them to learn respect for beautiful things.

The children were observed in the outdoor area. The area had a large, grassed space and tarmac where children could use the supply of ride on toys available to them. There was a large shed which was used to store the ride on toys and children’s wellies which their parents had provided. This area could also be used if it was raining to provide shelter for the children while playing outside. There were swings situated on a bark mulched area. There was a small house that children could sit in to and chat with their friends. There were four chairs which had the legs removed and were secured to a wooden palate. Children were observed sitting on the palate pretending to be in a bus.

## 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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

#### General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door of the registered provider's home which was secure on arrival and remained secure for the duration of the inspection. Parents collected their children from a side fenced area of the playground. The side gate was secure at all times during the inspection. The preschool room was situated on the first floor of the residential building. There were banisters on the stairs to assist children and staff. All radiators were thermostatically controlled. The fire exits were not obstructed. Cleaning agents were stored in a safe area not accessible to the children. The large playground at the rear of the service was safe, suitable and secure.

#### Infection control:

The service appeared to be clean and in good repair. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the toilet area beside the preschool room was recorded at 34 °C on the day of inspection. All bins in the preschool room and toilet facilities were foot pedal operated. Hand washing was supported in the service. Children were helped to wash their hands after using the toilet and after messy play.

## 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.
- (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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place in January 2025.

(b)

The annual record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment was carried out in the service in September 2024. The annual record of the maintenance of the smoke alarm on the premises was carried out in November 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the entrance hallway of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the children who were present on the day of inspection.