

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK095
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Name of Service:	Urlingford Community
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Address of Service:	Childcare Centre, St Kieran's Place, Urlingford, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	E41 T6Y7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sean Hennessy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	18
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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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Urlingford Community Childcare Centre is a registered full day childcare service in the town of Urlingford in north county Kilkenny. The community service is governed by a voluntary board of management and provides childcare services for children aged 1 to 6 years, Monday to Friday.

The childcare service operates from a purpose-built premises comprised of four classrooms, a designated kitchen area for food storage and preparation, a sensory room, sleep room, dining room for the wobbler classroom and three outdoor play areas which can be directly accessed from three classrooms.

Staffing

There are 29 staff members employed in the service including the designated person in charge, a chef and business administrator.

All staff members who as part of their role in the service, work directly with the preschool children, hold qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework. The Registered Provider does not work in the 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. The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 30.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations: 19, 23, and 24.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the four 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 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that either the designated person in charge or the named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear outline of the management of the structure was displayed in the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

- (2) Staff files for 29 staff members, including the registered provider were reviewed by the inspector.
- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the 29 staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures were on file for each of three staff members who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (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.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

Compliance Information

- (1) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the four classrooms throughout the inspection.
- Wobbler Room – There were 7 children aged 1 to 2 years cared for by 2 staff members throughout the morning.
- In the afternoon, from 14:00 hours, 4 children aged 1 to 2 years remained with 1 staff member.
- Toddler Room – There were 11 children aged 2 to 3 years cared for by 3 staff members throughout the morning and in the afternoon from 14:00 hours there were 4 children aged 2 to 3 years remained with 1 staff member.

The Rainbow Room/ Year 1 ECCE – There were 13 children aged 2 years and 8 months present with 4 staff members throughout the morning and from 14:00 hours there were 10 children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years present with 3 staff members.

In the ECCE Year 2 Room – throughout the morning there were 13 children aged 4 to 5 years present with 3 staff members and in the afternoon this classroom was closed.

(8)(a) On review of the staff roster and in discussion with the staff the inspector was assured that there were always at least two adults on the premises while children were in attendance in the service.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The inspector observed during the inspection that the service provided children with a learning and caring environment that was child centred and where each child's identity and uniqueness was respected. Physical environments had been created by staff and children planning and locating areas of interest to meet the needs of the children.

For example the children's consideration and input into their classrooms was observed with colourful balloons, colourful handmade crepe streamers and garlands which decorated the senior preschool room for their recent graduation and in the wobbler room where their "Come and explore our Wobbler Room" demonstrated that staff reflected on the children's families, communities and cultures with each child's identity, with personal, class friends and family photographs displayed making a connection between each child's home and the service. As displayed in the wobbler classroom and in discussion with the staff, the wobbler room had an "Ohana means

Family” philosophy – meaning family but encompassing the interconnectedness and support of friends and community members. “Ohana” also implies that everyone is included and respected.

Each classroom provided a variety of stimulating and well-resourced interest areas created to be comfortable and inviting for the children to play in.

Each classroom displayed photographs of children’s activities and experiences, which the inspector observed were in line with documented activity planning. The activities displayed visually, at the child’s eye level and children’s artwork provided the children to revisit the experiences and discuss them with the staff promoting conversations and providing opportunities for sharing of each child’s experience in the service with their parents/ guardians at collection time, when parents had opportunities to observe their child’s classroom, their work and experiences that they had participated in.

Throughout the four classrooms, the inspector observed that a key worker was allocated to each child which supported the continuity of the child’s care, secured attachments and promoted the connection between families and the service. Parents or guardians at drop off and collection times were greeted and responded to by the child’s key worker where possible, or another staff member familiar with the child. The staff afforded children and parents the opportunity to exchange information in a relaxed manner, actively listening to any concerns and providing reassuring answers where needed.

Children confidently and comfortably transitioned in and out of the service demonstrating a familiarity and confidence in the care provided. The staff demonstrated the innate ability to identify if one of their children was out of sorts, responding to cues, for example one child who was unusually very quiet cuddled with a staff member on a couch and while not displaying or recording an abnormal temperature, the staff member through a gentle caring conversation deduced that the child had a sore ear, and promptly responded to easing the child’s discomfort and reassuring the child.

Staff demonstrated that they were familiar with each child’s individual abilities and needs, facilitating learning and promoting independence appropriate to each child. Staff respected each child’s choice during play and mealtimes, supporting them and promoting their individual unique choices. While planned activity schedules were maintained, children were often observed to opt out from activities to take a relaxing moment in the soft rest areas provided or children with additional needs were supported in doing activities that they were particularly attracted to.

At mealtimes, staff sat with children, conversing about daily life and any exciting news in their lives. Children had access to drinking water in each classroom and at mealtimes staff ensured children of all ages were seated comfortably, with appropriate feeding utensils and support where required.

(3) Through the observation of the care provided to the children in the service, the staff demonstrated that they were familiar with their roles in safeguarding the children in their care, staff were respectful of each child affording children opportunities to speak, waiting, listening effectively to them, and supporting children in promoting positive behaviour throughout the service.

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 entrance was adequately secured with a call bell system to reduce the risk of any child exiting the service unsupervised and to prevent any unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

The perimeter of the service was secured with a high block wall and secured gates.

The designated person in charge assured the inspector, that on all mornings that the service is in operation, an outdoor play area risk assessment is recorded to ensure that there are no risk factors that may cause a potential risk to a child or staff member, prior to children using the play areas.

The kitchen area was inaccessible to the early years children and separate from the classrooms. Cleaning equipment and materials were safely secured in a designated storage area, inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

There were an adequate number of children's toilets, handwash basins, staff toilets, nappy changing areas and handwash basins provided for each classroom.

The running water was thermoregulated to ensure that it was maintained within a maximum temperature of 43°C.

Liquid hand soap, and paper towelling were supplied in each toilet and were easily accessible for the children. Children were observed to wash their hands independently post toileting, messy and outdoor play and prior to snacks and meals. Staff supported children of a younger age who required prompting and assistance while ensuring younger children from 1 to 2 years had their hands washed post nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

In discussion with staff members, there was a clear understanding regarding the staff member's role in safe administration of medication to a child or children in the service. Staff were aware of any child in their classroom who had a medication plan for the administration of medication in the event of a medical emergency and

demonstrated clear knowledge for safe administration of anti-febrile or prescribed medication in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

The inspector observed that staff placed children down to sleep in response to their sleep needs and daily routines as discussed with parents. The inspector observed that sleeping children had physical checks carried out every ten minutes with their colour, breathing and sleep position recorded in line with the service's safe sleep policy. There were an adequate number of standard cots provided for the children aged 1 to 3 years provided in the sleep room and an adequate number of stackable beds available for older children to sleep on if required.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy however do not routinely operate outings with the preschool children.

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 designated person in charge and staff in each of the four classrooms demonstrated to the inspector that each pre-school child's daily attendance and departure times from the service were recorded.

(3)(a)(b) The staff in the service ensured that no other person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee.

Any authorised visitors to the service were required to record the date of entry, their name, contact number, reason for entry, name of person who approved access and check in and out times on the visitors record book.

(4) The current visitors record which was available for review and demonstrated to the inspector that a record of authorised visitors to the service had been retained for the previous two years.

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

(1) There were 21 staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children.

The staff roster demonstrated that there were at least four to five staff members with FAR training present each day while the children were attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) A first aid box was available in each of the classrooms, in a clearly designated safe place. The first aid boxes were checked regularly and replenished as required.

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.
- (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.
- (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) (1) The following 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 14 May 2025.
 - (b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having taken place on 14 January 2025.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that a fire evacuation procedure notice was clearly displayed in the main entrance hall.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,

the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1) There was adequate and clear floor space provided for the children attending the service.

(4)(a)(b) The maximum number of preschool children that can be accommodated at any one time during is 71 preschool children during the sessional early childhood care and education hours and 63 preschool children for a full day care / part-time service.

The following space was available in each of the classrooms.

Classroom	Age Range	Clear Floor Space	Sessional	FDC/PT
Wobbler Room	1-2 years	28.65 square metres	10	10
Toddler Room	2-3 years	31.5 square metres	17	13
Rainbow Room	3-6 years	41.9 square metres	22	18
Senior Preschool Room	3-6 years	67 square metres	22	22