

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK096
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Name of Service:	Urlingford Pre-School for Little Learners
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Address of Service:	Old School, Urlingford, Kilkenny
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Eircode:	E1H 974
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Name of Registered Provider:	Angela Brennan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16 January 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	N/A
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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
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Description of service

Urlingford Pre School for Little Learners is a privately run service established since 1991. The service operates from a former single storey school building in the town of Urlingford, in north county Kilkenny. Children aged 2 to 6 years are cared for between the hours of 8.30am and 1.30pm. The service offers the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) between the hours of 9.00am and 12.00pm for 46 weeks of the year. A school age service is provided between the hours of 1.40pm and 5.30pm after the operational hours of the preschool service.

There are two separate entrances and hallways to each of the two playrooms in the service. Each playroom has a designated cloakroom, children's and staff sanitary accommodation and a storeroom. Kitchen facilities are available to staff working in the service. Three separate outdoor play areas are provided at the back and to the side of the premises. A designated car park is provided at the front of the building.

Staffing

The service is staffed by nine adults which includes the registered provider. Staff working in the service have childcare qualifications varying from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 to level 8. Four of the adults working in the service are employed under the AIM scheme and two staff members have also availed of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training (LINC). Experience in childcare varies from 1 year to 31 years.

Methodology

Tusla 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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

9-Management and Recruitment, 11-Staffing levels, 20-Facilities for Rest and Play, 23-Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child, 25- First Aid, 26-Fire Safety Measures, 28-Insurance, and 29-Premises. 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
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) On the day of inspection, the designated person in charge worked in a management capacity in the service and the deputy person in charge worked directly with the children in the service.

(c) Staff in the service were aware of their roles and responsibilities on the day of inspection and the rooms they were assigned to care for and work with the children in attendance.

(2)(a) Twelve references from past employers were held on file in respect of the nine staff members in the service.

(b) Six references from sources other than past employers were held on file for the nine staff members working in the service. All staff references were validated.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau as conducted in 2022 was held on file for all staff members in the service.

(d) A police clearance was held on file for one staff member who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as an adult.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) A police clearance certificate was not available on file, in respect of one staff member employed in the service since the previous inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following corrective and preventive actions were submitted by the registered provider.

Corrective Action

(2)(d) The registered provider submitted a copy of the application for police clearance to the inspectorate on the 16 February 2023. The registered provider advised that police vetting clearance for the relevant staff member will be in place in the service by 28 February 2023.

Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that all staff files have been checked to ensure that validated references, Garda vetting and police vetting where applicable are held on file in respect of all staff working in the service. Staff files will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the necessary documents are held on file.

Supporting evidence submitted

A copy of the application for police clearance was submitted to the inspectorate on the 16 February 2023.

A copy of the police clearance certificate was submitted to the inspectorate on the 19 February 2023.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 adults were available to care for the children on the day of inspection.
- (2) Four staff members cared for a total of 19 children in playroom one in the service. Three staff members cared for a total of 14 children in playroom two in the service.

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) Both playrooms in the service were well equipped with age-appropriate toys and play equipment located on low level shelving and in containers for easy access by children.

Playroom one comprised of three adjoining rooms with open access between the rooms. The art room was equipped with colours, paint and brushes, rice, stickers, scissors, paper and a paint easel. Toys on wheels, a tent and blocks of different sizes and dimensions were observed in the block room. The playroom was provided with sand and water trays with shovels, buckets and containers for messy play. A cooker, kitchen equipment and utensils and a washing machine were observed in the home corner. The imaginative play area housed a shop, office and hairdressing station. A doll's house was provided. Puzzles, games, shape boards and jigsaws were observed for tabletop activities.

Playroom two was equipped with tea sets, cooking equipment and utensils, dolls and a carry cot in the home area. A post office and a dress up area were observed in the imaginative play area. Blocks, bricks, trucks, cars, a farm set and farm machinery were provided in the construction area. Pencils, paint, shapes, paper and a paint easel were observed in the art area. A castle, small houses and miniature people were observed in the small world area. A doctor area and a puppeteer interest area were observed. Games, puzzles, flash cards and jigsaws were observed for tabletop activities. Both sand and water trays were observed for messy play.

(b) Both playrooms in the service were provided with rest areas for children to opt out of activities and to rest as required.

Playroom one had a timber stair leading to a tower which was furnished with soft mats and cushions. A soft couch was provided at floor level in the room.

Playroom two was provided with a soft couch and a low-level bed covered with a soft foam surface. Books were located on open low level shelving in the rest areas to assist children sit and relax as required while other children continued to play in the same rooms in the service.

(3)(a) The outdoor play area was located at the side and back of the premises and divided into three separate enclosed areas for children's use.

The football pitch provided had an all-weather surface and was secured with heavy duty plastic fencing. This area offered open space for children to run and play outdoor games.

The tarmac area was enclosed by high level stone walls, shed walls and heavy duty plastic fencing. This area was used for wheel along and push along toys outdoors. The playground was also enclosed by heavy duty plastic fencing and provided an all-weather surface.

A slide, sea saw, timber playhouses, climbing frames and an open housed sand pit were observed in the playground. A planting area, messy kitchen area and a sink for water play were also provided for use by children.

An open walled and roofed Perspex shelter provided a suitable area for outdoor play during poor weather conditions. Sheds on the grounds of the tarmac area provided suitable storage for outdoor play equipment. Children were observed to be dressed in appropriate outdoor clothing, coats, hats and boots while playing in the outdoor play areas when inspector arrived and throughout the inspection.

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

Stand up refrigerators were provided in the spacious cloakrooms off both playrooms to store perishable foods, snacks and drink containers as provided by parents and guardians for children in attendance. Sinks were provided in the playrooms to assist with wash up following break times.

On the day of inspection children were observed to enjoy sandwiches, rice, rice cakes, crackers and cheese and fruit at break time.

A separate refrigerator was provided in the art room for use by staff working in 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:

- Doorbells were provided at the secured entrance doors to both playrooms to assist with the drop off and collection of children to the service.
- Keypads were provided in the hallways inside both entrances to guard against unauthorised access to the playrooms .
- High level latches were provided on the playroom doors leading to the hallways and cloakrooms in the service.
- A storeroom was provided to store mops, brushes and cleaning equipment in an area outside of the playrooms.
- A timber fence and timber gate which was latched from the inside secured the open gable end of the service that led to the outdoor play areas to guard against unsupervised exit by children playing outdoors.
- The perimeters of the site were secured with stone walls at the front and sides of the premises and a combination of stone walls and heavy duty wire mesh on all remaining site boundaries. The entrance to the car park off the roadway and at the front of the service was secured with cast iron gates

Infection Control:

- Sinks were provided in both playrooms to assist with the cleaning schedule for the service.
- Chemicals and cleaning agents were stored in a secured press in the staff toilet area.
- Foot pedal operated bins were provided in the playrooms and adjacent to wash hand basins in the toilet areas.
- Openable windows in all playrooms ensured a good supply of fresh air directly from outside.
- The cloakroom off both playrooms provided a suitable location for the storage of coats and outdoor clothing. A shelf in both areas facilitated the storage of boots off the floor in both areas.
- An enclosed shed at the back of the premises provided a suitable location for the storage of waste and refuse prior to removal from the premises.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy to administer prescribed medication and temperature reducing medication.

A record of medication administered, and provision of parental consent was recorded on the service's electronic application system.

Hard copies were also available for recording parent's consent to administer medication.

Written parental consent to administer medication was also signed for by parents and guardians on the children's enrolment forms to the service.

Safe Sleep:

Rest areas were provided in both playrooms for children remaining in the service for the part-time service.

Fire Safety:

Fire extinguishers were wall mounted in the hallways in the service and in the playrooms. A fire assembly point was located on the fencing leading to the enclosed playground in the service.

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) Six staff members working in the service had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training with expiry dates of June 2023 in the case of one staff member, and 2024 in the case of the remaining four staff members.

(2)(a)(b) First aid boxes were held in storage on a high-level windowsill in playroom one and in a high level press in room two in the service.

Two additional first aid boxes were stored in the outdoor sheds off the play areas.

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 of fire drills was maintained in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 20 December 2022.

(b) The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment indicated that an annual service was conducted in July 2022. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system indicated that an annual service was conducted in December 2022.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was not on display in a conspicuous location in the playrooms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(4) The registered provider advised in the response to this regulation that a notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire has been placed in both classrooms and in the halls in the service.

Preventative Action

The registered provider advised that all safety notices will be checked monthly and staff updated on a regular basis on safety and fire drill procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the fire and evacuation procedure for the service was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Insurance cover was available for a maximum of 55 children in daily attendance at any one time in a part-time service. Insurance was valid from 1 March 2022 to 27 March 2023.

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 two playrooms in the service were in a good state of repair and maintenance on the day of inspection. There was no evidence of dampness or mould growth on internal walls and ceilings.
- (b) A smooth tarmac surface led to the entrances to the service off the roadway. The service was connected to both the public drainage and water supply.
- (c) Openable windows in all rooms in the service coupled with ceiling mounted fluorescent light fittings ensured a good mix of natural and artificial lighting throughout the service. All light fittings were covered with shatter proof diffusers. The oil fuelled radiators in the playrooms were guarded.
- (d) Rooms in the service were brightly painted. The floors were tiled in the sanitary accommodation and cloakrooms, with laminated floor provided in the construction room. There was heavy duty floor lino throughout the premises which was in a good state of repair and clean on the day of inspection.
- The dishwasher and double sink in the art room was available to assist with routine and daily cleaning of surfaces as well as toys and play equipment in constant use.

An electronic application was in use to maintain cleaning records for all areas of the service. The inspector was also advised that the services of an outside cleaner was availed of after operational hours to assist with cleaning of communal areas and sanitary accommodation in the service.

(e) Five toilets and 3 wash hand basins were available off playroom one for use by up to 22 children in daily attendance and prior to provision of the school age service.

Two toilets and 3 wash hand basins were provided off playroom two for use by up to 22 children in daily attendance.

A separate staff toilet and wash hand basin was provided for up to 8 staff in daily attendance at any one time in the service. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were provided adjacent to all of the wash hand basins in use in the service for hand washing and drying purposes.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) A separate wash hand basin plumbed with a hot and cold-water supply and properly connected to the drainage system was not provided adjacent to the nappy changing station in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) The registered provider advised in the response to this regulation that a wash hand basin with a hot and cold water supply and properly connected to the drainage system was installed beside the nappy changing unit on the 11 February 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

Picture evidence was submitted on the 16 February 2023 with the response to this regulation confirming the provision of a wash hand basin adjacent to the nappy changing station.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.