

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LD006
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Head Start Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carraroe, Off Rathcline Road, Lanesboro, Co. Longford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N39 W242
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Denise Owens
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Duignan
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

Head Start Preschool service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to operate between the hours of 9:30am and 12:30 hours, Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated from a purpose-built extension to the side of the registered provider's main dwelling with a separate entrance for the drop off and collection of the children.

A spacious outdoor area is provided to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service is operated single handedly. Two adults are available daily to assist the registered provider. These persons are supernumerary to the adult /child ratios.

On the day of the inspection the registered provider and a student were present in the service and working directly with the children.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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, student and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

Three staff files including one student were reviewed.

(2)

(a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of three adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4) One adult working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) There were ten children attending the service being supervised directly by two adults during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.
- (8)(c) The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge operating the service was at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

### 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 entrance to the service was secured and managed by the registered provider to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food

that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. Necklaces and chains are removed if a child is observed to be wearing them.

There was documentary evidence available that indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

### **Infection Control:**

The two adults supervised the children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. The two adults were observed washing their hands during the morning.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Cleaning schedules were recorded for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

### **Administration of Medication:**

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practices when administering medication in the service. There were no children attending who required medication to be administered while attending the service. Medicine was safely stored in the office.

### **Safe Sleep:**

A comfortable rest area was available in the care room for any child who wished to have a rest or take a break from activities for a while.

### **Fire Safety:**

The adults were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire signage was in place and the fire exits were not obstructed.

### **Outing:**

The service does not conduct outings.

### 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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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 registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' visit to the service was documented in the visitor's log.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

### 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 was a person who was trained in in first aid response (FAR) present and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the service.
  - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the staff members caring for the children attending the service.

### 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 written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 23 May 2025.
  - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on 11 October 2024, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 12 September 2024.
  - (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in the care room and when using the sanitary area.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 November 2025. The insurance provided cover for 11 children.