

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LD020
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Beginnings
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	23 Sycamore Close, Clonbalt Woods, Longford, Co. Longford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N39 V205
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Yvonne Kiernan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	19/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM	23
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon,
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Kennedy
<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>	Click or tap here to enter text.
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### Description of service

This pre-school service is in a detached premises, in an urban area on the outskirts of Longford town. The service operates a full day care service from 8.00 to 17:45hrs. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 45 pre-school children, at any one time. There are five playrooms, a designated sleep room and a kitchen. There are three large outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises. The service is registered for an afterschool programme. A separate prefabricated building is provided for the school age service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily. Eight staff including the registered provider work in the service. All staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education.

### 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 and premises and facilities. 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, the deputy 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.*

*(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The deputy designated person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived, and the registered provider was on the premises from 11:45hrs and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Documentary evidence indicated that either the registered provider or designated person in charge were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

The eight staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b) Eighteen of the eighteen validated written references on file in respect of the eight staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eight staff.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and therefore did not require police vetting.

(4) Eight staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

## 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider and person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were 35 children present. All children were aged between 12 months to 5 years. There were six staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, there was an adult who provided relief for lunch cover from 11:00hrs until 14:30hrs.
- In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 23 children present. All children were aged between 12 months to 5 years. There were five staff, directly caring for and supervising these children.
- The registered provider was supernumerary and acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

## 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,

#### Compliance Information

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack(s) and meal(s) without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting.

Thirteen children from the playrooms on the ground floor wore nappies and were changed on a regular basis.

The older children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become independent in toileting practices.

- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
- being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);

- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language;
  - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
  - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
  - The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
  - The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day while in the service.
  - The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times. Staff provided parents and guardians of younger children with a daily diary which detailed a child’s food provision, nappy changing, sleep provision and any medication administered.  
Staff collated for each older child a profile scrapbook learning journal, using observations and including samples of a child’s work.
  - Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child’s abilities, allowing for children’s partial participation and participation with support.
  - The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in designated cosy areas in each playroom.
  - There was adequate seating in the playrooms, provided for a staff member to facilitate feeding and comforting a young child.
  - In toddler rooms 1 and 2, the younger children aged 1-2 years had space to explore and move safely. The children were doing jigsaws, playing in the home area, playing with sensory equipment, stacking rings, and playing with musical instruments.  
The children aged 2-3 years, were observed playing in the home area and construction areas and were also observed doing arts and crafts activities.  
The children in the ECCE room 1 were observed doing tabletop activities, playing with construction blocks, and having stories read to them by the adult.’
  - On the day of inspection, in the outdoor areas, the children were observed at role play in the mud kitchen. They played on push cars, bicycles, and scooters and on the swings and on the slides. The children were observed running, chasing, catching, and exploring.

- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. For example, the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. The staff encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. In the ECCE rooms, the children were given choices on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used open ended questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- Throughout the inspection, the voice of the child, their choices, interests and their age and stage of development were considered. The children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. The children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

### 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 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,

(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, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The playrooms were designed and arranged to:

- maintain a space that is clean, organised and free of clutter.
- accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group.
- divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children’s play and learning.
- give children with additional needs access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities as the other children, to promote their welfare and development.
- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.
- The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school.
- The environments provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. Staff encouraged the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child’s needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.
- The children had access to varied materials and equipment, which were rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests and skill levels.

- Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible to the pre-school children.
- The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.
- The playrooms on the ground floor had clearly defined areas of play with a home area with accessories, a messy play area, a chill out area, tabletop area and a construction area. Each section was well equipped with a selection of shape sorters, activity gyms, building blocks, stickle bricks, rattles, soft toys, musical toys, jigsaws, and books. There were construction toys, home areas with accessories, a farm with a selection of animals, cars and trucks and a variety of materials to stimulate the senses. There were art and craft materials such as paints, trays, aprons, playdough, brushes, paper and glitter, shapes, bits, and bobs.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters and children’s individual and group artwork, and photographs of the children. Displays included children’s trick or treat handprints and footprints, birthday balloons, the weather chart, “all about me” and the children’s paintings of acorns, hedgehogs, and spiders.
- In the ECCE rooms 1 and 2, there were play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore were freely available in the service. For example: open-ended objects such as playdough, construction and building materials such as stacking shapes, pipes, beads, magnets, links, connectors, threading material, pins, suckers, bricks, shape cutters and blocks. There were problem solving items such as insets, puzzles, counters, timers, links, matching cards, frames, games, and jigsaws. There were measuring and pouring items, such as jugs, scales, and containers. There were role play areas such as kitchens, the village shop, dolls houses, and construction tables with tools. There were creative play areas with a selection of art and craft materials including crayons, pencils, blackboards, straws, paper, paints, lollipop sticks, stickers, and trays. There were books, animals, dinosaurs, dolls, transport vehicles, dolls, baby baths, action figures, and baby baths.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters, educational materials, planners, photographs of the children and children’s artwork. Displays included “welcome Autumn”, colours, days of the week, today is, birthdays, our local community, “our amazing work”, scarecrows, pumpkins and displays on emotions. There were handprints, numbers, the alphabet, our family tree, Autumn, and the daily routine.

(1)(b) There were cosy areas with bean bags, child sized couches, soft floor matting and cushions in each of the playrooms. The service had a designated sleep room with six cots. The service had four stackable beds for any older child attending on a part time or full day care basis requiring sleep provision.

(3)(a) Outdoor areas

- The service balanced the need for safety with the need to provide physical, challenging experiences for children. The area was secured by walls and covered with grass, concrete and rubber matting surfaces.
- The equipment and materials available in the outdoor play area provided children with play, movement and exploration opportunities that are exclusive to the outdoors.
- The registered provider advised that the outdoor area was an extension of the indoor playrooms and linked with the learning that goes on inside. On the day of inspection, all the children had the opportunity to be outside.
- The equipment and materials in the outdoor play area supported children's play, movement, and exploration, and provided opportunities exclusive to the outdoors. Materials and items included swing sets, a climbing frame with slides, a mud kitchen with play accessories, footballs, sand and water play, picnic tables and playhouses. There was a digging section with stones and digging accessories. There were push cars and rockers. There were transport toys, a wooden wigwam and a basketball hoop.

### 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

- The service had a healthy eating policy.
- From 8.00hrs to 9.00hrs, the service provided breakfast for any child who was hungry.
- At 9.45hrs, the children had their snack of yogurt and cereals provided by parents and guardians.
- At 11.30- 12md the children had bacon, mashed potato, sweetcorn, carrots and gravy which was cooked on site.
- At 14:30-15.00hrs, the children were offered afternoon snack of rice cakes, crackers, sandwiches, and fruit provided by parents and guardians.
- The premises has its own kitchen, and the main meal is prepared by the registered provider.

- The children attending the service on a full day care and part time basis were offered had two meals and snacks. The registered provider advised that the staff ensured that each meal snack had two food groups and each meal / snack was no more than three hours apart. The registered provider advised that there was a supply of food in the kitchen, for any child requiring additional food.
- The crockery, plates and drinking utensils were suitable for the age and stages of development.
- A drinks shelf was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to 'self-serve' their drinks.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in a designated fridge.

## 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:

- There was a buzzer access system at the front door.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows had restrictive access devices as a safety precaution.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.

- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The registered provider clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk to the pre-school child.

### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- There was a designated nappy changing area with a designated wash hand basin. On the day of inspection, thirteen children wore nappies. These children were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Staff advised that currently two children use soothers. These were stored in individual labelled containers and the service has a microwave steriliser.
- A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The registered provider had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

### Administration of Medication:

- On the day of inspection, no child was on medication.
- Medications were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- The staff demonstrated to the early years inspector their knowledge of best practice with regards to the safe storage, administration of and documentation requirement for any medication given in the premises.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness. At 12.14hrs three children from Toddler room 1 were observed sleeping. The inspector observed that staff stayed in the sleep room to settle the children to sleep. Children over two years had access to a stackable bed and four children were observed sleeping.

There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements, as per the 'safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy'.

- A thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in labelled containers.
- Rest quiet areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chose to.

### 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)

Five staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of current first aid for children.

(2)(a) Seven suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.

(b) The first aid bags were readily available, with content items within date.

## 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.
- (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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 21st of September 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 6<sup>th</sup> of October and smoke and fire detection system was dated 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2022. It is acknowledged that subsequent to the inspection of the service, the registered provider submitted evidence that the smoke and fire detection system was serviced on 06<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, which was for a full day care service for 45 children and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.