

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK019
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Name of Service:	Miles of Smiles Preschool
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Address of Service:	Scoil Íosaf, Knockane Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V42 E002
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife McCarthy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, 1 st Floor, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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

This preschool service commenced operation from Scoil Iosaf National school, Newcastle West, Co Limerick in September 2022. The service is open from 09:15hrs to 12:15 hrs Monday to Friday for 38 weeks providing a sessional care to the children. The children have access to a large, designated playroom, a halla, sanitary facilities for the adults and children and an enclosed outdoor play area, a green area and a section of the school yard for outdoor play. The service is registered to provide care and education to 22 preschool children.

Staffing

The registered provider and two staff are working directly with the children each day.

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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 19 24, 25 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform

decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (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 registered provider was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was 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 member of the team.

(2) All staff files were reviewed.

(a) There were two written and validated references available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff working at the service. Garda vetting for the staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) The adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements specific for the service available on the day of inspection. These policies were reviewed and updated in September 2024.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there were 15 pre-school children and three adults on the premises for the sessional service. There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at the time of the inspection.

art 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

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- During the inspection it was noted that the pre-school focused on supporting each child's learning, development, and well-being.
- A healthy eating policy was in place, with parents providing nutritious snacks such as fruit, sandwiches, yogurts, cheese, and crackers. Perishable items were refrigerated if needed.
- Children had unrestricted access to toilets, which were equipped with hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels for hygiene. Waste disposal was handled with foot pedal-operated, lidded bins.
- Protective clothing was available for messy play, and the availability of rain gear ensured outdoor play regardless of weather.
- A rest area with soft furnishings was available in the library corner for relaxation and quiet time.

On the day of the inspection, it was noted that outdoor play was part of the daily routine, regardless of weather conditions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The pre-school room was spacious, with clearly defined activity areas for individual and group play. Child-friendly storage with low-height open shelves allowed easy access to materials.

Activity areas included:

- Home corner & imagination play area.
- Work/tool bench/ farm area/a variety of blocks for building
- Art and Crafts area with accessible supplies.
- Turf table for open ended educational materials.
- Library corner for quiet reading and relaxation.

Children's artwork was displayed at their eye level, along with educational posters on topics like seasons, colours, letters and sounds. A family wall showcased photos of each child's family. The outdoor play areas includes a section of the school yard for ball play, for the ride on toys, messy play with sand and water trays. The children have access to an enclosed play area that had soft impact rubber matting and was usable in most weather conditions. The outdoor areas offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Each child was checked in by an adult on arrival to the service. At home time each child was checked out by an adult. The time of arrival and departure was documented for each child.

(3)(a) No person other than a child attending the service, a person dropping or collecting a child, an employee or an unpaid worker could enter the premises without prior approval.

(b) All visitors were signed in and out, documenting their time of arrival and departure and the reason for their visit. The name of the person who admitted them to the building was also recorded.

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) The registered provider had up to date first aid responder training on file.

(2)(a) The registered provider ensured that a suitable equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the preschool 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record of the maintenance of the smoke alarm system was available for review by the inspectorate. The firefighting equipment were serviced in February 2025.

(4) A fire action notice was clearly displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Fire drills were not carried out by the service every month and more frequently if necessary.

The records demonstrated that three fire drill took place from January to June 2025, and these were dated 27th of February, 20th of March and 7th of April 2025. From September to December 2024 only one fire drill was practised, and this was dated the 3rd of October 2024.

(b) The servicing of the smoke alarm for the service was not carried out annually. The last service was dated the 13th of July 2022.

The registered provider had the smoke alarm system serviced on the 13th of June 2025 following the inspection. These non-compliances posed a risk to the safety of children and staff attending the service in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated the following:

(1)(a) Fire drill will be practised on a monthly basis and will be included in the monthly compliance tracker. The service will document each fire drill in the fire safety file and a head count before and after each drill will be included.

(b)The smoke alarm was immediately serviced on the 13th of June 2025.

The fire drills and the smoke alarm system will be on a monthly/yearly compliance tracker to ensure this will not reoccur in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the smoke alarm service record was submitted to the Early years' inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 26 Fire Safety points (1)(a) and (b).