

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK191
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Unikids Childcare
-------------------------	-------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	University Business Complex National Technology Park Castletroy Limerick
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	V94A529
-----------------	---------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Noel Noonan
-------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
----------------------	----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/03/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	91	PM	73
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
---	---

<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Ryan
----------------------------------	--------

<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

This private service was established in 2005. It operates a full day care service from 07:45 – 17:45 hours Monday – Friday from a purpose-built facility in an urban setting. Curriculums for each age group are play based. Children are accommodated in seven different rooms according to their age group i.e. junior wobblers, senior wobblers, playschool, junior preschool, senior preschool, morning sessional room and a sensory room. The children have access to sanitary accommodation areas, two sleep rooms and outdoor play facilities are available directly off each playroom.

### Staffing

There are twenty-six adults working directly with the children in the service which includes the person in charge and deputy person in charge. The registered provider does not work on site in the service.

All staff have childcare qualifications ranging from QQI Level 5 – level 8. An additional adult is employed in the service as a chef.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,24,26 and 28.

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.*

*(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge or the deputy person in charge were available on the premises at all times.

(2) The person in charge had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all staff.

(a) Written references that were validated were available from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) Written references that were validated from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available in respect of staff. The re-vetting timeframes were complied with as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting for all staff every three years.

(d) Staff who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months had provided police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out before any staff member was allowed work in the service.

(4) All staff working directly with the children in the service had evidence of having childcare qualifications.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(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

(2) At all times during the period of the inspection the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

On the day of there were 20 staff working across 6 rooms with 91 children present in the morning and 73 children present in the afternoon. The minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each room.

- Junior Wobbler Room - There were 7 children (1- 2 years) and 2 staff present.
- Senior Wobbler Room - There were 9 children (1- 2 years) and 2 staff present.
- Playschool Room - There were 18 children (2-3 years) and 3 staff present.
- Junior Preschool Room - There were 21 children (3-4 years) and 3 staff present.
- Senior Preschool Room - There were 19 children (4-5 years) and 3 staff present.
- Morning sessional Room - There were 17 children (3-4 years) and 3 staff present.

Four additional staff were available to cover for staff breaks.

### 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

#### Compliance Information

##### (1)(a) BASIC NEEDS:

The healthy eating policy of the service detailed a well-balanced and nutritious menu. The full time cook freshly prepared all meals daily. Dinner consisted of pesto pasta and vegetables. Morning snack consisted of beans on toast. Drinking water was available throughout the day in each room if a child was thirsty and needed a drink. The children sat together around the lunch tables in the dining room and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food. Smaller groups of children went to the dining room which allowed for a quiet, calm unhurried atmosphere at mealtimes. Children could then sit on chairs and look at books which appeared to be an enjoyable experience for them.

The children who were toilet trained toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it. Children in nappies were changed regularly by staff whilst following the nappy change policy. Staff were observed to wear disposable gloves and a disposable apron while nappy changing. The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after toileting, painting and outdoor play and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid antibacterial soap.

Children could rest and relax as desired throughout the day in each room in the library area on adult/child sized couches, cushions and on the floor mats. Children under 2 years of age slept in traditional type cots and were observed to be checked by staff every 10 minutes in line with the safe sleep policy of the service. Suitable floor beds with mattresses were available for children less than 2 years of age and consent forms had been signed by parents to allow the beds be used by their child.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement within each room and each room had its own outdoor play area directly off the room. The children were encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour. Relationships around children were supported as the core staff in the service had not changed since the last inspection and children

were familiar with staff as they used the keyperson system in each room of the service. Staff had a good understanding of the benefits of the use of the keyperson system.

A group of children were taken on a short outing to a local park on the day of the inspection. Staff supervising this group had all the required safety measures in place in relation to bringing a first aid box with them, having a charged mobile phone and having the parents contact phone numbers readily available in the event of an emergency.

Children in the older age groups were supported to self-care as they were observed putting on their coats independently to go outdoors to play. Wellingtons and all weather outdoor gear was available in each room which allowed children to play outdoors in poor weather conditions.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

The service was operated from a purpose-built building in an urban setting. The children had access to the following rooms: junior wobblers, senior wobblers, playschool, junior preschool, senior preschool, a morning sessional room, a sensory room, sanitary accommodation areas, 2 sleep rooms and outdoor play areas. The rooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently.

Shelving units were also used effectively as room dividers to create play spaces, such as the library area, home corner construction area, small world area and arts and crafts area. Other interest areas included: sand play area and tabletop activities area. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials. A sensory room with dimmed lighting, different textured floor surfaces, bean bags, climbing blocks, a light table and mirrors were observed to be used by the playschool group on the day.

The children had access to a large outdoor play at the rear of the facility which was surrounded by high railings and gated. It was covered with an all-weather surface and play equipment included a large climbing frame, bikes, trikes, ride on toys, playhouses, water play, a reading corner, a music house, an obstacle course. an activity centre, seating for adults and a large bouncing castle. The outdoor play facilities were used by the children and staff on the day of the inspection.

### 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) Nine staff members held current certification in first aid responder (FAR) for children and a member of staff with first aid responder certification was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) First aid boxes were accessible and safely stored in the service.
- (b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

### 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) The fire drills were practiced monthly, and the record was available. The date of the last fire drill was 14.02.2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in August 2024 and a record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The fire and smoke alarm system were tested and serviced June 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The insurance policy demonstrated that adequate insurance was available for the service and had an expiry date of 27.03.2025.