

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>   | TU2015MH056  |    |      |
| <b>Name of Service:</b>  | Forever Friends Pre-school                               |    |      |
| <b>Address of Service:</b>   | Fairyhouse Racecourse, Ratoath, Co. Meath                |    |      |
| <b>Eircode:</b>  | A85 XK30   |    |      |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>  | Audrey Fitzpatrick                                       |    |      |
| <b>Service type:</b>   | Sessional  |    |      |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>   | 18/04/2023   |    |      |
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b>  | AM   | 31 | PM 0 |
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>  | Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan,<br>Co Meath |    |      |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>   | D. Murray  |    |      |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Early Years Inspector                                    |    |      |
| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>  |  |    |      |
| 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

Forever Friends Pre-school is privately owned and provides a sessional service from 09:30am to 1pm to children ranging in age from 2 to 6 years. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service consists of 2 care rooms: the Green and Yellow rooms, sanitary facilities and a small kitchen.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs a deputy person in charge and 3 childcare staff who were all present on the day of inspection.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,23,25,26 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 8(1). This finding is outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

## Additional Information

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was operating outside the service registration status as the service is registered for 30 children at any one time while 31 children were present.

## 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 II - Registration and Register

### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, the registered provider was operating outside the service registration status as 31 children were present while the service was registered to care for 30 children at any one time. A letter from the registration office was issued to the registered provider on the 08/05/2023 with a response received on the 09/05/2023 which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The extra child in the service on the day of inspection was having a trial day. Two children attending the service were off sick and were not expected to attend.

There will be no more trial day for new children starting instead the registered provider will hold an open day at the end of the school year.

### Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 8. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

Following discussion with the registered provider, the inspector was informed that 2 staff members had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 06/06/2021. These files were reviewed.

- (2)(a) Two validated written references were from past employers.
- (b) Two validated written reference were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for the 2 staff members.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.
- (4) The 2 staff members whose files were reviewed work directly with children in the service and each held appropriate childcare qualifications at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.
- (3) There were 5 adults working directly with the 31 children attending the service.
- The Green Room had 2 adults with 16 children.
  - The Yellow Room 3 adults with 15 children.

## 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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- The staff members in the care rooms were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their play activities.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches and the staff members were observed sitting and chatting with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The theme of the week was "Pets", "Birds" and "Spring" with children's art work displayed to reflect these themes.
- Outdoor play was facilitated for the children on the day of the inspection and the children were dressed appropriately in their coats and hats before going outside.

#### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children as evidenced in the positive use of language and soft tones.
- Staff were observed offering choices to children and were observed to be responsive to the children's needs for praise, encouragement, and reassurance.

- The children in each care room showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. Transitions were handled smoothly with staff giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

## 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-
- (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.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016 shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

### Compliance Information

- (1)(b) There were couches available in both rooms for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.
- (2)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed with fencing and the gate was secured when in use. The surface area consisted of grass. An additional small outdoor area was available at the main door to the service but was not in use on the day of inspection as maintenance work was required.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The care room had areas of interest with supporting equipment, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Play materials and play equipment were visible and easily accessible to the children on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences. Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children. A suitable range of books were available in each care room and accessible to the children at their level.
- The outdoor play area was equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment for example, a large slide, small plastic play house, sand pit, “Bug Motel,” mud kitchen and planting containers.

### 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 gates and the entrance doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation and at the wash hand basins in the Green Room. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy and outdoor play.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

There was no daily risk assessment conducted for the outdoor space.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

A Daily Risk Assessment tool is now available and a risk assessment will be conducted prior to using the outdoor space.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

A Risk Assessment Tool

#### Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

### 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)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 06/02/2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced in August 2022. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 02/02/2023.
- (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 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance in place to cover up to 30 children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.

#### Non-Compliance Information

Insurance cover for the children was inadequate to cover all children attending on the day of inspection there were 31 children present.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

As the service is registered for 30 children only 30 children will be attending the service at any one time in the future.

#### Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 28. The response received has been accepted.