

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH073		
Name of Service:	Here We Grow Preschool		
Address of Service:	Pastoral Centre, Main Street, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath		
Eircode:			
Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead Jones		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	07/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM 4
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle		
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.		

Description of service

Here We Grow Preschool is a privately owned early years service located in a room in the pastoral centre to the rear of St Patrick & St Seachnail's church in Dunshaughlin, Co Meath. The service provides sessional care and education to children aged 2 years to 6 years operating from 9:40am to 12:40pm and from 1:10pm to 4:10pm Monday to Friday. There is one care room in the service with sanitary facilities located off the adjoining corridor, an enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service employs 3 staff members including the registered provider. The registered provider and 1 core staff member were present on the day of the inspection, both of whom work directly with the pre-children in the service on a daily basis. One staff member is employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

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, 11, 15,19,23,25 and 26; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider via e mail on the 08/04/2025 in relation to one staff member who did not have completed Garda vetting disclosures available on the day of inspection.

A response was received from the service on the 09/04/2025 which outlined the steps taken by the service to address the immediate action notice, this has been accepted.

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

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

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of inspection.

The files for 3 staff members including the registered provider all of whom work directly with the children were reviewed.

(2)(a) Four written, validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Two written validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 2 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the 2 Garda vetting disclosures that were reviewed.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files it was confirmed that no staff members had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 2 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was not available for 1 staff member who works directly with the children in the service. This staff member was on leave and not present in the service on the day of inspection.

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to confirm that 1 staff member whose files was reviewed and who works directly with children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2)(c) Registered provider has not yet received a hard copy of the garda vetting form due to recent national changes of organisations responsible for vetting processes. Evidence of an application reference number was provided and application made for vetting. Employee is on bereavement leave.

(4) Staff qualifications were displayed on the wall on the day of the inspection.

Preventive Action

(2) (c) Ensure all garda vetting is stored on site.

(4) Staff qualifications are always on display on the wall in the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of staff members qualification.

Copy of Garda vetting.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been adequately addressed.

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 was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct when the inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection and was appropriately maintained in the service throughout the inspection.
- There were 2 adults caring for 14 children aged 3 years 7 months to 5 years. A staff member was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio to support children with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single handedly.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children’s records. All of the 12 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3) The children’s records were available and open for review by the inspector as an authorised person.

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 examples demonstrate how the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic needs:

- The two staff members engaged warmly and positively with the children throughout the inspection and demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising their individual interests and preferences.
- The children bring their morning snack with them to the service. These included sandwiches, crackers yogurts, fruit, and drinks. The children's water bottles were available within their reach, should they feel thirsty at any stage. The staff members chatted with the children during snack time, encouraging conversation and promoting a relaxed atmosphere.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues when they needed to use the toilet. The staff members accompanied the children to the sanitary accommodation located off the adjoining corridor.
- The staff members were observed to be calm and responsive with the children and used a combination of distraction techniques and negotiation to address minor issues that arose.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff members greeted parents and children in a friendly and relaxed manner, spending time conversing and sharing information in a friendly way.
- The children were observed to engage and interact comfortably with the two staff members, using their names in conversations and play, and the staff members were observed responding to the children in an interested and positive manner.
- The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment and were observed naturally forming small groups and engaging in a range of tabletop and play activities during the inspection.

Physical and material environment:

- The play resources and materials that were available in the service were stored on low level accessible shelving enabling the children to take and return materials as they chose. A home area with play materials

was available to the children, a dolls house with play figures, transport toys which included cars, and a raised transport for the children to use their cars on was provided in addition to reading resources jigsaws and tabletop materials.

- The children enjoyed time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection. The outdoor area was located to the rear of the service in an enclosed area which was secured with a fence and gate. The area was surfaced with bark, the area was resourced with a play kitchen with sand provided, play diggers were provided in an area beneath a tree for the children to use, wheelbarrows were available to enhance the children's play in addition to playhouses and bench seating. The space also provided the children with the opportunity for running and free movement.

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 premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises, with the entrance doors leading into the premises and the gates leading into the outdoor play area fitted with latches and locks positioned out of the reach of pre-school children.
- Cleaning agents were safely stored on high shelving out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- There was a supply of liquid soap and paper towel at each hand-wash basin.
- Adequate handwashing practices were observed during the inspection.
- The children's lunches which they brought with them for home and contained perishable items were stored in the fridge until the children required them.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored safely out of the reach of children. No child attending the service was observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- The records indicated that fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis to familiarise both adults and children of the procedures to follow in order to evacuate the premises in a safe manner.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- The water at the sink in the sanitary area used by the children to wash their hands was cold. Cold water does not support effective hand hygiene.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

- The temperature of the water has been adjusted to meet regulations. The management of the centre will ensure the immersion will be on.

Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- Regularly check water temperature and liaise with centre management to ensure compliance with same.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been adequately addressed.

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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced by the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed monthly in the service.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on the 07/08/2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) An up-to-date record was not available for the maintenance of the smoke alarms in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(b) The centre management have had the smoke alarms serviced and tested.

Preventive Action

(b) The management have ensured that they will have this carried out on a quarterly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of maintenance certificate for smoke alarms submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 26 - Fire safety measures has been adequately addressed.