

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015MH076

**Name of Service:** Home from Home Daycare

**Address of Service:** Curragha Rd, Ratoath, Co. Meath

**Eircode:** A85 PP29

**Name of Registered Provider:** Lesley Harkin

**Service type:** Full Day, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 27/06/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan, Co. Meath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

**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

Home From Home Daycare provides full day care, sessional and part-time care to children from 1 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) and operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm. The building is a converted residential property consisting of 4 care rooms, 2 cot rooms, office, kitchen, children's dining room and sanitary facilities. An additional care room downstairs was not in use.

The rooms in operation were as follows:

Downstairs:

**Wobbler room** provides care for children from 1 to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

**Toddler room** facilitates the care of children from 2 to 3.6 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Upstairs:

**ECCE Year 1** provides care and education to children from 3 to 4 years.

**ECCE Year 2** provides care and education to children from 4 to 6 years.

The outdoor area to the back of the building was divided into three areas by wooden fencing. An additional outdoor area was available off the dining room.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, 10 childcare staff and a cook. Present on the day of inspection were the registered provider, manager, 8 childcare staff and a cook.

### 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.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, manager, 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (c) A clear management structure was displayed in the entrance hallway in the service.

(2) Thirteen staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b) Twenty six validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for 8 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who had resided outside 3 different jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d) The staff member has applied to the necessary countries for police vetting.

The registered provider will ensure that no staff member will commence employment in the service until all required police vetting is sought.

### Supporting documentation submitted

One Police vetting received.

Application for remaining police vetting's.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has not addressed the non-compliance for regulation 9 (2)(d) as 2 police vetting's remain outstanding.

The response received has not been accepted.

### 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) Present on the day of inspection were the registered provider, manager and 8 childcare staff working directly with the 41 children attending the service. The registered provider and manager was available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.

The rooms were as follows:

Downstairs:

**Wobbler room** had 2 adults caring for 8 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

**Toddler room** had 2 adults caring for 12 children ranging in age from 2 to 3.6 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Upstairs:

**ECCE Year 1** had 2 adults providing care and education to 9 children ranging in age from 3 to 4 years of which 6 were attending on a full day care basis with 3 attending the sessional service only.

**ECCE Year 2** had 2 adult providing care and education to 12 children ranging in age from 4 to 6 years of which 6 were attending on a full day care basis with 6 attending the sessional service only.

(8)(a) According to the staff roster two adults were present on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

## 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:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms any child who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Sleep practices were child led with some children availing of an early morning nap while the older children were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest at the service's designated sleep time after dinner.
- Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Children in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms were brought to the dining room for their meals. Additionally, the older children in ECCE Year 1 and Year 2 also had their meals in the dining room. The children appeared to enjoy the change of environment and mixing with the children in the other care rooms. Children were heard happily chatting to each other as they ate.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms the themes were "Summer Holidays" and "Under the Sea" with children doing art work to reflect these themes. Children in the ECCE rooms learned all about "Pool Safety" and the children in ECCE Year 1 spent time proudly gluing in their graduation photographs into their learning journals to take home.

- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members. Additional equipment was brought out for the children in the ECCE care rooms with and staff assisted the children to make an obstacle course.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences. Individual programs of care were available for children who required them with additional supporting equipment available to assist the children participate fully in the class activities.
- In the Wobbler, Toddler and ECCE rooms the parents were updated on a tablet device with activities pertaining to their children. There was evidence of good parental partnership with the parents in the ECCE room 2 as parents visited to talk to the children about different topics e.g. occupation and holidays.
- The "Family Wall" in the care rooms gave a sense of identity and belonging. Overall, 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.

(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,

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in all care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Two cot rooms were available for the Wobbler and Toddler rooms with 6 standard cots in each room.

(3)(a) There were four encloses and secure outdoor areas available to children on the premises.

## 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 rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, Montessori equipment and a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving.
- The 3 outdoor areas to the rear of the building were divided into separate areas by wooden fencing for the different age groups. Equipment included toy and mud kitchens, swings, wooden activity unit with a climbing frame and slide, wooden tree blocks to sit on, balance beams, tyres, sand table, digging pit and ride on toys. An additional sheltered area was located off the hallway with a surface consisting of soft matting. Additional equipment was brought out to this area for the children to play with.

## 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 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry all prepared onsite by the cook. All food was provided by the service.

On the day of inspection, the children had crackers and fruit served at 10:30 am.

Dinner was served at 11:15 am for the younger children and 12:30 pm for the older children which consisted of a choice of fish fingers or chicken goujons with carrots, broccoli, mash potatoes and gravy. Water and milk were the drink of choice with water also available in the care rooms throughout the day.

## 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured with a buzzer system. The 3 outdoor spaces and the additional sheltered area were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the 3 outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.

##### Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot rooms were maintained between 18 to 22<sup>o</sup>C while children were sleeping. All children sleeping were over 1 year.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

##### Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for 1 staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

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

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

An application was made to renew the staff member garda vetting.

A tracking record will be kept of all staff members garda vetting's to ensure they are in date.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Up to date garda vetting for 1 staff member.

Tracking record.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23 General Safety. 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 21/06/2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 28/03/2024. The firefighting equipment was last serviced 30/11/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 80 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.