

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH157
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ratoath Childcare Centre Limited
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Jamestown, Ratoath, Co. Meath
<b>Eircode:</b>	A85 CX82
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ellen Holian
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
<b>Dates of Inspection:</b>	26/03/2024
<b>Date 2 of Inspection:</b>	27/03/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	52	PM	52
<b>Day 2</b>	AM	53	PM	53

<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 & C. Tunney
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Ratoath Childcare Centre Ltd is situated on the outskirts of the town in 2 purpose-built facilities. The service provides a sessional, part-time and full day care service to children from 0-6 years and is registered to operate from 08:00am to 6pm. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The service consists of 6 childcare rooms and 4 school aged rooms in the following buildings:

#### Building A:

Downstairs were the following rooms:

The Waddler room which catered for children from 1 to 2 years.

The Toddler room 1 and 2 facilitated the care of children from 2 to 3 years.

The Playschool room provided care for children from 3 years to 4.6 years.

The Pre-school room provides care and education to children from 4 to 5 years. Other facilities included a kitchen/staff area, resource room, office, sanitary facilities and a reception area.

Upstairs were the following rooms:

The Pre-school room provides care and education to children from 4 to 5 years.

#### Building B:

The Montessori Room (ECCE) provides care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 4 to 5 years. No pre-school children were present on the days of inspection. The remainder 4 care rooms were used to accommodate the school aged children. Other facilities included a kitchen and sanitary facilities.

The service had 5 outdoor areas with only 3 in use on the day of inspection.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, deputy manager, 17 childcare staff, 4 school aged staff, 1 administration staff and 3 cooks.

26/03/2024 Present in Building A, were the manager, deputy manager, 11 childcare staff and 1 cook. Three students who were doing their level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education were also on placement.

27/03/24 Present in Building A, were the registered provider, manager, deputy manager, 12 childcare staff, 1 administration staff and a cook. Two students who were doing their level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education were also on placement.

## 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, deputy 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.

#### Compliance Information

On the 26/03/2024 and 27/03/2024

- (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) (a)&(b) Twenty-eight staff files were reviewed along with 3 students.

Fifty-three validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 31 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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

(4) Twenty 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

## Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)&(b) Nine validated written references were not available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(4) On 26/03/24, one staff member working in the Pre-school room did not have a complete childcare qualification.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a)&(b) Written references verified and attached for staff. A check list has been added to each staff file to ensure all required documentation is available and reviewed on a regular basis.

(4) This staff member is now rostered to work with the school aged children.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Seven written references received.

Staff roster.

## Summary Comment

In relation to the non-compliance regarding validated references, the registered provider has given assurances that validated references were now available, however evidence was not submitted for all staff as 2 written validated references were not provided for review. The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) has not been addressed.

The registered provider has given assurances that the staff member who does not have the required childcare qualification is working with school aged children. This has 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) On both days the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.

**26/03/2024**

There was the manager, deputy manager, 11 childcare staff working directly with the 52 children attending the service. Three students were on placement.

**27/03/24**

There was the registered provider, manager, deputy manager, 12 childcare staff working directly with the 53 children attending the service. Two students were on placement.

(2) On both days the correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.

**26/03/2024**

In Building A : Downstairs:

The **Waddler Room** had 9 children between the ages of 1 to 2 years being cared for by 2 adults and a student.

The **Toddler Room 1** had 9 children between the ages of 2 to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults with 2 students who were available to provide assistance.

The Toddler and Playschool room operated as one room on the day of inspection as the adjoining doors were open.

The **Toddler Room 2** had 7 children between the ages of 2 to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.

The **Playschool Room** had 14 children between the ages of 3 to 4.6 years being cared for by 2 adults.

Upstairs:

The **Pre- School Room** had 13 children between the ages of 4 to 5 years being cared for by 3 adults.

**27/03/2024**

In Building A : Downstairs:

The **Waddler Room** had 9 children between the ages of 1 to 2 years being cared for by 3 adults with 1 student.

The **Toddler Room 1** had 11 children between the ages of 2 to 3 years being cared for by 3 adults with 1 student.

available to provide assistance.

The **Toddler Room 2** had 7 children between the ages of 2 to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.

The **Playschool Room** had 14 children between the ages of 3 to 4.6 years being cared for by 2 adults.

The **Pre- School Room** had 12 children between the ages of 4 to 5 years being cared for by 2 adult. The deputy manager was available to provide assistance as needed.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced by the staff roster on both days.

## 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:

- All children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Childrens rotated between their care rooms and the outdoor spaces during the day.

- Staff members were observed changing children’s nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Older 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.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children’s learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. In all care rooms the theme of the month was “Easter” with the children’s art work displayed to reflect this theme.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Waddler room sleep was 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.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic play with both their peers and staff members.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with children being given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff spoke to all children in a positive way and listened attentively to each child. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on “The Family Wall” in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard. 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) The cot room off the Waddler room had 8 standard cots for children under 2 years requiring sleep. A sleep room for the Toddler room at the end of the corridor had 18 stackable beds for the older children. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest, if needed.

(3)(a) The outdoor area for the Waddler and Toddler rooms had an all-weather surface which was enclosed with walls and had a secure gate.

An outdoor area to the front of the main entrance door was not in use on the days of inspection.

A second outdoor area was available to the front of the service which was enclosed by fencing and walls and had an all-weather surface along with a tarmac area.

Building B had an outdoor area for the Montessori Room, which was enclosed, had a cement surface with a partially sheltered space.

To the side of the building was an enclosed grass area which was not in use on the days of inspection.

### 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

All 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, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.

The outdoor area for the Waddler and Toddler rooms had plastic slides, rockers, toy cars, mud kitchen, activity tray and push along toys.

The second outdoor area to the front of the service had a large activity unit, 2 play houses, stationary rockers, swings, mud kitchen, tyres and a pit for sand. Access to this area is through the kitchen area.

Building B outdoor space for Montessori Room had a mud kitchen, goal post and connecting plastic shapes, scooters and tyres. See non-compliance below.

#### Non-Compliance Information

Building B outdoor space for Montessori Room was poorly equipped. The mud kitchen was toppled over with limited play equipment to enhance the learning experience for a child. The partially sheltered space was used for storage of the plastic shapes and tyres. Outdoor areas should be stimulating, imaginative, energetic, and challenging.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

There are 3 playgrounds available to the Montessori class.

The play area inspected is primarily used for school age children, and it is acknowledged work need to be completed on this area.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of 3 outdoor areas. The outdoor area to the front of the main entrance door is now in use.

## Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliances for regulation 21 the response received has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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 cooked on site. All food was provided by the service. On the day of inspection, the children had a variety of cereals for breakfast. The main meal of the day was served between 11:30 and 12:30pm which consisted of Tuna Tagliatelle with peas. Evening tea was served at 3:30pm which consisted of Ham and Cheese toasted sandwiches. Additional snacks were available for the children staying until 6pm if required. Water and milk were the drinks of choice

## 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 and the outdoor spaces 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 outdoor space.
- 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. Liquid soap and hand paper towels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Childrens pacifiers were placed in individual boxes and labelled.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.

### Safe Sleep:

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

- The temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20<sup>0</sup> C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Children sleeping on stackable beds were supervised at all times.

### 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:

The following safety measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

1. 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'.
2. The following were trip hazards:
  - The steps leading down to the outdoor area in Building 2 did not have markers to identify each individual step.
  - A trailing flex from the speaker in the Playschool room was assessable to the pre-school children.

## Infection Control:

3. Warm water was not available in the wash hands basins for children in the sanitary accommodation on the first floor to promote effective handwashing.
4. In the nappy changing room off the Waddler room, a bin used for waste disposal was a swing bin. All bins used for waste disposal must have a non-touch mechanism.

## Fire Safety:

5. There was no fire assembly notice to indicate the fire assembly point.

## Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Re-vetting has been received for the staff member. Date of re-vetting to be noted on file checklist and followed up regularly.
2.
  - The steps have been re- sprayed. The spraying of the steps has been added to our annual Building work checklist.
  - Trailing flex from speaker has been secured to the wall. Positioning of flexes to be reviewed daily within the rooms.

## Infection Control:

3. The hot water issue in the upstairs wash hand basins has been resolved.
4. The swing bin was removed Day 1 of the inspection.

## Fire Safety:

5. A fire assembly notice is now in place on a fence in the outdoor space.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting received.
2. Photographic evidence of the following:
  - Steps painted.
  - Flex secured to the wall.

### Infection Control:

3. Written documentation that warm water is now available in the wash hands basins for children in the sanitary accommodation.
4. Photographic evidence of the swing bin removed.

### Fire Safety:

5. Photographic evidence of the fire assembly notice placed on a fence in the outdoor space.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliances 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

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) Only one staff member present between building A & B had an up to date First Aid Responders course(FAR). This is not adequate as this staff member is not always on duty and cannot be available to the 2 buildings at the same time.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

First Aid Responders course has been booked for two staff members to ensure there is adequate cover for both buildings.

Another two members will be trained in June 2024.

All staff have paediatric first aid training.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentation submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has not addressed the non-compliances for Regulation 25 as there remains an insufficient number of staff available at all times on the premises with appropriate FAR training.

**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 in March 2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the firefighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fire fighting equipment were last serviced on the 11/05/2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 05/06/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

## 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 130 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to the 27/3/2024.