

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH168		
Name of Service:	Scope to Grow		
Address of Service:	Fairyhouse Road, Ratoath, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A85 XV00		
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Hinkson		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	26/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM 28
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham		
Title:	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

Scope To Grow is one of two services owned by the registered provider. The service provides sessional, part-time and a full day service to children from 0 to 6 years and operates from 7:30am to 6:30pm each weekday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The premises is purpose built consisting of 6 care rooms, office, kitchen, storage and sanitary facilities.

The rooms in the service were as follows:

The Nursery Room provides care to children from 10 months to 2 years.

The Toddler Room accommodates children from 1 to 2 years.

Pre-school 1 facilitates the care of children from 2 to 3 years.

Pre-school 2, 3 and 4 provides care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to school going age.

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

Staff employed in the service were a manager, deputy manager, eight core childcare staff, 1 relief staff and a cook 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 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 manager, deputy 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, 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

(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.

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

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for 12 staff members.

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

(4) Nine 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)(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Evidence of a childcare qualification was not available for two staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff member has made an appointment with the Embassy to have the required police clearance certificate issued. When recruiting staff, management will ensure it is clearly communicated if the staff member has resided outside of Ireland for a period over 6 consecutive months since the age of 18.

Management will ensure this information is clearly stated on the person's curriculum vitae in their staff file and ensure police clearance is obtained where necessary.

(4) One staff member has completed a NFQ Level 6 qualification in Early Childhood Education and is waiting for the Qualification Certificate to be issued by the college in the coming weeks. This staff member always works alongside a fully qualified person.

The second staff member qualification has been translated and is now available on the staff member's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Application for Police Vetting.

Translation of childcare qualification.

Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan submitted a translated qualification in relation for one staff member which has been accepted.

However the non-compliance in relation to police vetting for one staff member and an appropriate qualification for 1 staff member has not been addressed and remains outstanding.

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 the day of inspection there was a manager, deputy person in charge and 7 adults with 1 additional adult arriving to the service at 10.20am and a relief staff member arriving at 11.30 am. All 10 childcare staff were working directly with the 37 children attending the service. The manager was also available to provide assistance as needed.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

The Nursery Room had 6 children ranging in age from 10 months to 2 years being cared for by 2 adults.

The Toddler Room had 4 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years being cared for by 1 adult up to 11.30am with an additional adult arriving to provide assistance in the room.

Pre-school Room 1 had 5 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years being cared for by 1 adult.

Pre-school Room 2 had 8 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to school going age being cared for by 2 adults.

Pre-school Room 3 had 7 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to school going age being cared for by 1 adult.

Pre-school Room 4 had 7 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to school going age being cared for by 1 adult.

Two additional adults were available to provide assistance to the rooms as needed.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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:

- The staff members in all care rooms were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their play activities. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones when engaging with the children and showed a keen interest in what each child was doing.
- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. In the Nursery/Toddler rooms and Pre-school room 1 some of the children were settling into the service and when upset, were picked up and nurtured and cuddled until they settled. 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.
- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- A record was kept on an electronic device in the Baby/Toddler/Pre-school room 1 of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information can be accessed by the parents. Children in the Preschool rooms 2, 3 and 4 activities were also recorded on the electronic device which was available for parents to review.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. 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. A cot room was available off the Nursery room with 6 standard cots for the younger age group who required sleep. The older children requiring sleep were accommodated on stackable beds in the Toddler Room 1.

(3)(a) The outdoor space was suitable, safe and secure and was divided into 2 areas by fencing with an artificial grass surface. The smaller area accommodates the Nursery/Toddler and Pre-school room 1. The larger area facilitates Pre-school Rooms 2,3, and 4.

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.
- Equipment in the smaller outdoor area included an activity tray, building blocks, push along toys and rockers. The larger area has a climbing tunnel, planting boxes, tyres, activity tray with bricks and push along toys. Additional equipment was available in the service for both area which can be brought out.

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 selection of meals ranging from meat, poultry and fish along with an evening snack. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis, breakfast was available from 7:30am to 8:30am consisting of a choice of cereals. All children in the service brought their own morning and afternoon snack which was served between 10 to 10:30am and at 2pm. On the day of inspection dinner was served between 11:30 and 12midday which consisted of spaghetti bolognese with evening tea consisting of a choice of sandwiches served at 4pm before leaving for home. Water was the drink of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care rooms.

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:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured with a buzzer system and the outdoor spaces were enclosed with walls and had a coded gate. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a regular basis.

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.
- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the refrigeration of perishable items.

Safe Sleep:

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

- Temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰ C and between 18 to 22⁰ C in the Junior Pre-school 1 room while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log on each child recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on children asleep in the cot rooms and in the Junior 1 room.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

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 28/08/2023.
- (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 on the 20/10/2023 . The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced in October 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 50 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2023 to the 27th March 2024.