

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN054
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Name of Service:	Respond Early Years Service, Carrickmacross
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Address of Service:	5 Plás Fionn Barra, Convent Lands, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 NX86
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Rourke
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/06/2023
Day 2	21/06/2023

No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	11
Day 2 21/06/23	AM	33		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange, Plantation Walk, Monaghan, Co Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
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
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Description of service

Respond Early Years Service Carrickmacross have been operating as a community run childcare service since 2006. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged from 9 months - 6 years of age. The service is open from 08:30 to 17:30 each weekday and caters for a maximum of 43 children. The service operates from a purpose built 2-storey building in a residential estate in the town of Carrickmacross Co Monaghan. The service currently has 3 care rooms in operation namely: the Wobbler Room, Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms. There is 1 sleep room off the Wobbler Room. There are nappy changing and sanitary accommodations, a kitchen, staff room and an office. The service has an outdoor area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are 12 adults employed in the service. Nine staff including the service manager who work directly with the children, 1 adult employed as a cook and 2 adults who are employed through a community employment 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 are 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 and safety. The inspections 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.

Additional Information

A Safety Immediate Action Notice was issued on the 20/6/23 in relation to raised room temperatures. A response was received by the Inspectorate on 21/6/23 from the registered provider and this was accepted.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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,

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) Thirteen staff files including the registered provider were reviewed.

(a) & (b) There were 2 written references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 8 childcare staff and the registered provider, the cook and 2 staff members present in the service on a community employment scheme.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for 12 staff members and the registered provider.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented for inspection documentary evidence of international police vetting was available for 1 of the 2 staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the childcare qualification for 8 staff members met the minimum qualification required to enable them to work directly with the preschool children.

Two staff were employed under community employment schemes and working in a supernumerary capacity and therefore did not require a childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) International police vetting was not available for 1 adult who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction as an adult for a period of 6 months or more.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) Non-compliance discussed with HR manager outlining the importance of a thorough check of CVs. HR will thoroughly check CV and Regional EY manager will check CV at interview stage to ensure the relevant police vetting is adhered to before employment commences.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the international police vetting submitted to the Inspectorate for review.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate is satisfied that the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance identified in Regulation 9.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) On the days of inspection when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10:45am there were three rooms in operation and the following adult: child ratios were observed:

Day 1: 20/06/23

- **Wobbler Room:** There were 8 preschool children aged 9 months -2 years present with 2 adults and one adult who was present on a community employment scheme.
- **Junior Preschool Room** There were 6 preschool children aged 2-3 years present with two adults.
- **Preschool Room:** There were 18 preschool children aged 3-5 years present with three adults.

The person in charge and one additional adult who was engaged in catering duties were also present in the service.

Day 2: 21/06/23

- **Wobbler Room:** There were 8 preschool children aged 9 months -2 years present with 3 adults and one adult who was present on a community employment scheme.
- **Junior Preschool Room:** There were 7 preschool children aged 2-3 years present with two adults.
- **Preschool Room:** There were 18 preschool children aged 3-5 years present with two adults.

The person in charge and one additional adult who was engaged in catering duties were also present in the service.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults 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

There were 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: namely the Wobbler, Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children’s learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children’s drinks cups and bottles were stored in the care rooms, and they were accessible as required. Staff were observed to sit with the children in the service at mealtimes and this time was used to encourage conversations between the children. Assistance was given to the older children who required help with opening lunches and certain foods and to the younger children who required feeding. Bibs were put on the younger children before meals and hands and faces cleaned appropriately after the meals.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- In general in the Wobbler Room, individual child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children’s routines.

- The children were observed to move freely in the care rooms and had a change of environment into the outdoor areas on a number of occasions. All children were dressed appropriately to go outside with sunhats and suncream applied.
- The adults throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms for example *“good boy....you are eating your dinner...” “well donelook what you did...wow...well done.”*
- Staff in the Wobbler and Junior Preschool Rooms were observed to nurse any child who was upset or tired e.g., a child in the Wobbler Room who had fallen outside was carried and comforted by the staff.
- A key worker system was in operation in the service. In the Junior Preschool Room, photographs of the children and their key support workers were observed on display in the care room.
- The staff reported that most communication with parents was verbally at collection and drop off.

Physical and Material Environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service.
- An adult chair was available in the Wobbler Room for an adult to sit and comfortably nurse or feed a child.
- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment were available in the Junior and Senior Preschool care rooms that support many areas of development such as fine and gross motor skills, role play, speech and language and sensory development.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in these rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the older children.

Programme Of Activities

- Staff were recording observations and emerging interests of the children. *“Go with the flow”* observations and pictures were on display in the Junior Preschool Room.
- ‘Memory books’ were available for the children and these included evidence of artwork and photographs of activities undertaken during the year. These are reported to be brought home at the end of the school year.
- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in the care rooms for example, butterfly cutting and sticking pictures, caterpillars, a leaf, clay ladybirds, farm pictures, Irish flags and life cycle of the frog.

- The children were observed to engage in a variety of activities that promoted many areas of development for example, story time with discussions about the meaning of the story, circle time which included a discussion about thunder and lightning, outdoor play, games such as musical chairs, art and painting. Child-led and initiated activities were facilitated and supported by the staff present in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that each child's learning, development, and well-being is being facilitated within the daily life of the service in relation to the following:

- In the Wobbler Room on day 1 of inspection, the majority of toys and equipment e.g. interactive toys, push toys, soft toys, animals and art supplies were stored up on high shelving and not readily accessible to the children in this room. The toy kitchen had limited resources to support play activities such as some toy food pieces.
- Documentary evidence was not available that detailed how the service would meet the needs of children who require additional supports in the service.
- It was observed that one child was returned to the outdoor area in wet clothes after having their nappy changed. This was brought to staff attention by the inspector and was also identified by another staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Following the inspection a quality mentoring session took place by the 'National Quality Enhancement Program mentor' to engage in reflective practise around the areas of non-compliance and immediate actions completed.
The in-house quality mentor has devised a quality mentoring programme regarding Regulation 19 inclusive of action plans, workshops and onsite assessments. Individual staff mentoring also forms part of the program to ensure all staff are meeting the best standards of practice and to ensure upskilling remains central to service delivery.
- 'My Inclusion Plan' will be used alongside memory books as supplementary documentation of how children who require additional supports are facilitated to reach their full potential. A copy of this document will be made available to all staff. All early educators will receive training and support to implement this documentation tool 'My Inclusion Plan'.

3. Educators will ensure that all children wear aprons when engaging in water play. If children's clothes get wet, they will be changed into dry clothes and apron put back on if children wish to remain engaged in water play.

Best practice will be discussed at staff meetings so that all children receive the highest standard of care and education.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of 'My Inclusion Plan' document and staff meeting agenda submitted to the Office of the Early Years Document.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate is satisfied that the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances identified in Regulation 19. These will be for review at the next inspection.

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)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in the three care rooms, with a couch, soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.
- A separate sleep room was located off the Wobbler Room and contained 5 standard cots for those children under 2 years of age and 1 daybed for the children over the age of 2 years who required a sleep.

(3)(a) The enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises and is separated into 2 areas; area 1, which is accessed by the children attending the Senior Preschool Room and area 2 that is accessed by the children attending the Wobbler and Junior Preschool Rooms. The areas are fenced and gated and there are a variety of surfaces including a grass area, safety matting plus paved and loose stone paths. A variety of toys and equipment were available to support areas of development including ride on equipment, cars, scooters, a small slide, a wooden and a plastic playhouse, a wooden tepee, water trays, a toy kitchen and a variety of picnic tables and seating.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. There was a trailing electrical lead hanging down from a projector on a shelf above one of the cots in the sleep room. This lead was accessible to any child in this cot and a health and safety risk. The projector was also unsecured and a potential impact hazard.
2. Soft toys were inappropriately stored in the sink in the sleep room.

(3)(a)

3. A number of broken pieces of toys and equipment were observed stored in the outdoor area for example, in area 2 the small slide was cracked. In the partially covered section of area 2 the following were observed; an electric fan and lead, a broken pink bicycle, broken plastic plant containers, a broken plastic racket, a black refuse bag and a broken hard plastic bucket with sharp edges exposed. The outdoor daily checklist observed on the day of the inspection had not been completed since 12/06/2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. Trunking secured to wall so that all electrical wires are secure and inaccessible to children. Projector is now secured. This non-compliance will be specifically added to the daily and monthly health and safety checklist to ensure that all areas are consistently safely maintained and documented accordingly.
2. Soft toys removed from sink and stored appropriately. All staff will receive training with Quality Enhancement mentor regarding best practice.

(3)(a)

3. All unused, broken, or damaged equipment have been removed from the gardens.
We appointed a new compliance officer to ensure risk assessments are completed daily and all unsafe/damaged items are removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 20 have been addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The room temperatures exceeded the safe recommended room temperatures of 18 – 22 °C for care rooms.
 - At 12.20pm the Baby/Wobbler room temperature was 24.7 °C
 - At 12.25pm the Junior Preschool room temperature was 25 °C
 - At 12.20pm the Senior Preschool room temperature was 25 °C

A Safety Immediate Action Notice was issued on the 20/6/23 in relation to raised room temperatures. A response was received by the Inspectorate on 21/6/23 from the registered provider and this was accepted.

2. A protruding nail was observed on one of the wooden beams on the balance bridge in the outdoor area. This is a potential injury hazard.

Infection Control:

3. There was no hot water available from the sink in the Wobbler care room and there was no liquid hand soap available in the nappy change area. This did not allow for effective handwashing.
4. The following infection control risks were observed during nappy changing.
 - The same pair of gloves were used to carry out 2 nappy changes.
 - After a number of nappy change procedures with the used gloves still in place the staff member was observed to write up the nappy change record, wipe down the nappy change mat and return the child to the care room. This practice contaminates multiple other surfaces.
 - The staff member carrying out nappy changing did not wash their hands or the child's hands after the nappy change.

5. An empty nappy bin was observed stored on top of the sink in the nappy change area.
6. Some perishable items in the children's lunches were inappropriately stored on shelves in the care room rather than in a refrigerator e.g., yoghurts, cheese and ham sandwiches.

Safe Sleep:

7. The written log in use to record sleep checks did not allow for the recording of the child's colour while sleeping.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Cooling boxes and fans purchased, large air-con unit has been rented, installed and in use daily. Careful monitoring of temperatures and use of equipment in remedial action when required.
2. Wooden beam with protruding nail removed from garden. Health and Safety Risk Assessments will be carried out regularly, will be more thorough and reported in timely manner. This will form part of new compliance officer's checklist.

Infection Control:

3. Thermostat adjusted to ensure a more consistent availability of warm water. Soap dispenser refilled. Water temperature and soap dispenser checks will be added to daily checklist and monitored by compliance officer.
4. A lengthy discussion and demonstration on best practice regarding nappy changing procedures, infection control and cross contamination prevention measures was carried out at the staff meeting held on the 26th of June. Health and safety practice will form part on the quality enhancement program rolled out by in-house quality mentor.
5. Unused nappy bin removed from sink and stored upstairs. Unused equipment (stored safely) will now be added to daily checklist and monitored by compliance officer.
6. Children's snacks from home will be stored in the fridge until snack time at 10.00am. Parents will be informed to pack perishables in paper lunch bags with child's name printed. Staff will store in temperature-controlled fridge.

Safe Sleep:

7. Sleep records to be used, which include the monitoring of child's skin colour. Correct sleep record template has now been implemented and its adequate completion will be monitored by compliance officer. New Tusla Guidance for ELSAC on sleep provision for children under 24 months will be issued to all staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Copy of Agenda for staff meeting submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep log template submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate is satisfied the registered provider has adequately addressed the non- compliances identified in Regulation 23. This will be for review on the next inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the preschool children at all times.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes available in the service were stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and were available for the children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes did not contain eye pads and contained alcohol wiping pads and not antiseptic cleaning wipes.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) New eye pads and antiseptic wipes were purchased and placed in all first aid boxes.

Staff made aware of correct equipment for first aid boxes when refilling.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place for up to 43 children until the 29/2/2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required,*

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The cold water tap in the sink in the Wobbler Room was in a state of dis-repair with the water constantly running from the cold tap.
 2. There were accumulations of dirt in the creases of the nappy changing mat and on the nappy change unit which required a deep clean.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated nappy changing record submitted.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Deep clean of changing mat and changing unit

Preventive Action

Nappy changing records updated to include cleaning of changing mat and unit, staff training provided at staff meeting held on the 26th of June. Newly appointed compliance officer will also monitor this.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate is satisfied that the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances identified during inspection in Regulation 29.