

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN054
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Respond Early Years Service, Carrickmacross
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	5 Plás Fionn Barra, Convent Lands, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A81 NX86
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa O'Rourke
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	11/06/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	12
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin, K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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

Respond Early Years' Service Carrickmacross is a not-for-profit early years' service in operation since 2006. The service provides full day, part time, and sessional preschool care and education to children from 9 months to 6 years. The service is also registered to provide School Age care. Respond Early Years Service Carrickmacross operates from 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 09:00am to 12.00pm daily. The service operates from the ground floor of an administrative building in a residential housing estate. There are 3 care rooms in the service currently referred to as the Wobble/Toddler room, the Junior preschool room, and the Senior preschool room. Two enclosed outdoor spaces are located to the rear of the service.

### Staffing

The service employs 12 core staff members including the service manager, early years educators, relief staff and a cook. There are also 3 additional staff members employed under the Community Employment (CE) scheme, 2 of which undertake childcare duties under the supervision of management and core staff and 1 who carries out housekeeping duties. The registered provider is not present in the service on a daily basis.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child with a total of 12 child records sampled from across the 3 care rooms.

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 inspector wishes 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, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a person designated to deputise when required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.20am on the day of inspection and remained present on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

A total of 15 files were reviewed in relation to the staff members of the service. These files included the service manager, 10 staff who work directly with the children on a daily basis, 1 staff member who holds kitchen/catering duties and 3 adults employed under the CE scheme.

(2)(a) &(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 15 adults whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 15 adults whose files were reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 2 adults who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The service manager and all 10 core staff members who worked directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. Two staff employed under community employment schemes and working in a supernumerary capacity did not require a childcare qualification.

### 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) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the day of inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed on the morning of the inspection:

- Wobbler/Toddler room: There were 7 children aged 1 years and 4 months -3 years and 3 months present being cared for by 3 adults.
- Junior Preschool Room There were 11 children aged 3 years and 7 months -4 years and 5 months present being cared for by 3 adults. A staff member in this room was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio to support children with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- Preschool Room: There were 14 children aged 4 years and 8 months -5 years and 5 months present being cared for by 2 adults.

(8)(a) Two adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in the service.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

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

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

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

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

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

(3)(c) The children's records were available and open for review by the inspector as authorised persons.

### 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 of the service.

#### Basic needs:

- The service provides morning snack, dinner and afternoon lunch to all children attending the service. On the day of inspection, children had boiled egg, toast and fruit for morning snack, savoury mince, mashed potato and vegetables for dinner and ham sandwiches and custard was planned for the afternoon. Mealtimes were observed to be a social and relaxed occasion with the practitioners sitting with the children whilst they ate providing them with assistance when needed. Drinking water was freely available and accessible to the children in all care rooms.
- Staff were attentive to the children's personal care needs. Nappies were changed regularly, and children used the toilets independently with discreet supervision. In the Wobbler/Toddler room staff cleaned children's faces and noses when needed and ensured children had appropriate clothing for outdoor play.
- Throughout the care rooms in the service the staff were observed warmly engaging with the children, providing nurturing care, encouraging them with positive feedback and facilitating their play activities. Appropriate tones of voice and use of language was observed at all times. The staff provided comfort and reassurance to children when needed and responded to children's requests for activities or company with enthusiasm. When meeting children's personal care needs such as nappy changing, staff took the opportunity to chat or sing with the children.
- Child-led sleep routines were followed in the Wobbler/Toddler room. The staff demonstrated their knowledge of the children's needs as they described the different sleep requirements of each child. For example, a child placed to sleep in the cot was lifted back up after 15 minutes as the staff knew by the child's mood and behaviour that they were not ready for sleep and would go down later in the day. Floor beds were available for children over the age of 2 who needed to sleep.

- When required the staff used gentle yet effective techniques to support children during times of upset, challenge or minor disputes such as re-direction, reminders of good choices or support to problem solve.
- All of the children attending the service enjoyed time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- There was a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the service which was supported by the service manager and staff of the service. The team were observed to communicate well together and support each other to ensure a smooth running of the day and consistency of care to the children. While doing this the adults are also modelling positive interactions and relationships to the children.
- In each care room there was a 'family wall' where each child had photographs displayed of their families. These photographs were displayed at the children's level allowing them to engage and interact with the photographs. The family wall supports children to feel safe and secure in the environment and supports them to build a positive sense of identity.
- The service implements an 'open door' policy for families which allows parents to enter the service to drop off or collect children from their care rooms. The inspector observed warm and familiar interactions between the staff and the parents, and interesting information about the child's day was shared. The service manager also described how parents are invited to come to the service to help during events or visit the care rooms. The service is currently using a software application to record children's learning experiences and daily routines that will be accessible to parents from September. For the moment, this information is printed from the application and added to children's 'Memory books'.

### Physical and material environment:

- The layout of the care room and availability of resources and equipment on open low-level shelving facilitated the free movement of the children allowing them to navigate spaces with ease selecting play materials and resources.
- The care rooms were arranged by interest areas to encourage and facilitates a variety of play experiences. This included well-resourced home corners, reading/relaxation areas, construction area, art materials, and resources for tabletop activities.
- The children had access to range of sensorial resources indoor and outdoors including modelling dough, sand play, water play, dyed rice and trays where other daily sensory activities were provided.

- The provision of natural and open-ended materials supports children curiosity and creativity. This included materials such as pinecones, shells, stones, leaves, plants, cardboard tubes, paper, wood and cork.
- The space and landscape of the outdoor area provided the children with ample opportunity for gross motor development through use of steps, hills, ramps and equipment such as bikes, ride on toys, bridge and balance beams.
- An enclosed garden designated for use by the Wobbler/Toddler room and junior preschool room had a range of age-appropriate materials and equipment such as mud kitchen with real life equipment such as pots, pans and microwave, water wall, sandbox, teepee for shelter, a slide, a low climbing frame with a tunnel, water tray and chalk for mark making. The other enclosed space was designated for use by Senior preschool room and provided access to a sensory table, mud-kitchen with supporting play resources, tyres and balance beam, flower beds, bridge and willow tunnel. The children and staff had also made a scarecrow which was placed next to the teepee.

### 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 entrance door and internal doors of the service were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on and out of reach of children.
- A system of daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments was in place to identify and remove hazards or damaged equipment.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service.
- The adults and children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times such as before meals, following outdoor play or following toileting and nappy changing.

- Children's soothers were stored in individual lidded tubs in the Wobbler/Toddler room.
- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being used and disposed of by staff members after each individual nappy change. Pedal operated lidded nappy bins were provided for the disposal of nappies. This practice reduces the risk of cross-contamination.
- Weekly and daily cleaning and disinfection schedules were on display and up to date throughout the service.

### Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered to them on the day of inspection. There were no children present on the day who required a medical care plan.
- A Medication Administration book was used to document occasions when staff were required to administer medicine to children. A review of the previous entries demonstrated good practice in relation to parental consent prior to administration, recording of times, dates and dosages of medicines and signature from parents on collection of confirmation of information sharing.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children under the age of 24 months had access to standard sized cots in the sleep room adjoined to the Wobbler/Toddler room.
- Children over the age of 24 months who required sleep or rest had access to raised floor beds.
- The cot mattresses were in good condition and covered in a waterproof mattress protector.
- Staff were observed to carry out 10-minute physical sleep checks of sleeping children. Records of these sleep checks were maintained noting the child's position, colour and breathing pattern.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

1. The procedures for sterilising of soothers used in the Wobbler/Toddler room were not adequate in ensuring effective cleaning and sterilisation. In discussion with a staff member, they explained that the soothers are rinsed under the water after use and placed back into the lidded box. The box is cleaned once a week. Adequate sterilisation of soothers to sustain infection control should be carried out regularly and involve cleaning and sterilisation.
2. There were 2 cots in the sleep room that could not be situated at a distance of 50cm apart with the current layout and were measured to be at a distance of 25cm apart. It is noted that on the day of

inspection children were not observed using these cots, but it was acknowledged by service staff that the cots are used.

**Fire Safety:**

3. On review of the Wobbler/Toddler attendance book the staff members were signed out of the service for the day in advance of the end of their shift. This practice can negatively impact on fire safety procedures during an emergency evacuation.

**Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Infection Control:**

**Corrective Action:**

1. New sterilizing equipment was purchased to ensure soothers are being effectively sterilized daily and all staff have been shown how and when to use the equipment appropriately
2. One of the five cots was removed, from the sleep room, to achieve a minimum distance of 50cm between each of the four remaining cots.

**Preventive Action:**

1. Washing and sterilizing of soothers has been added to the daily chore list of staff and a step by step guide to washing and sterilizing soothers is on display beside soother containers. The services safety compliance officer will ensure that appropriate sterilisation is being carried out.
2. The services safety compliance officer will ensure that the appropriate distance between cots is maintained.

**Fire Safety:**

**Corrective Action:**

3. A staff meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> June where a discussion took place regarding the risks of not recording attendance accurately and the importance of having a live register of attendance for the safety of children and staff.

**Preventive Action:**

3. The manager will carry out random spot checks to ensure that attendance records of staff are accurate at time of inspection.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**Infection Control:**

Photographic evidence of new sterilising equipment  
Documentary evidence of new soother sterilising procedure  
Documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and minutes.

**Fire Safety:**

Documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and minutes.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed by the registered provider.

**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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times.

(2)(a)&(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises and these were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of 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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill for the whole service took place on 20/05/2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was certified as having been last serviced February 2024. The smoke detection system was certified as having been serviced on 01/05/2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were 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

Documentation was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate a maximum of 43 preschool children in full day care, with an expiry date 28/02/2025.