

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO007		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Aughagower Community Childcare Ltd.		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Old School House, Aughagower, Westport, Co. Mayo		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F28 FP96		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Saoirse Conroy		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/06/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	37	PM 5
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

The service provides sessional and part-time care and education to pre-school children aged between 2 and 6 years of age from 08:30-13:30, Monday to Friday. An afterschool service is also provided for school aged children. The service operates from a purpose build single storey facility incorporated within an old school building. It is in the rural village of Aughagower in county Mayo. It contains two pre-school playrooms. In addition, there is a dining area, a kitchen, an office, a storage room and laundry facilities. Two enclosed outdoor play areas are located to the rear and the side of the building with direct access from the playrooms.

### Staffing

There are six adults working in the service including the service manager. In addition, there were two students on placement in the service on the day of inspection. The registered provider is not actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the service. The manager of the service is a member of the childcare staff and works directly with the children throughout the day.

### 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 and safety. 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 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.

(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 manager was assigned as the designated persons in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the service manager was the person in charge and was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.
- Following a review of the service files and discussion with the service manager it was confirmed that there were eight staff members working in the service on the day of inspection, which included the manager, deputy manager and two students.
- (2)(a) Of the 16 references required, 10 references were sourced from past employers and 6 of these references were validated.
- (b) Of the 16 references required, there were 4 references from sources other than a past employer available and 3 of these references were validated.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seven adults who required Garda vetting. One student within the service did not require Garda vetting due their age. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

A Police Vetting disclosure was available for one adult working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.

- (4) Six adults who were working directly with the children, had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

Two written validated references were not available for one adult working in the service. There were five references available in respect of three staff, however these references had not been validated.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Two written and validated references were provided for the adult working in the service. The registered provider has incorporated extra protocols including a reference validation book to ensure all references are validated.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence was submitted to the early year's inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The actions together with the evidence submitted has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and deemed to have addressed the non-compliance identified on the day of inspection.

## 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 period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Giraffe room: Three adults cared for 19 children aged 3-5 years of age.
- Zebra room: Three adults cared for 18 children aged 3-5 years of age.

In the afternoon 2 adults cared for 5 children present aged 3-5 years of age.

Two students on placement were present in the service on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) The registered provider demonstrated that a minimum of two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### 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

- During the inspection, the children ate snacks which consisted of fruit, yogurt, crackers, ham, sandwiches and cheese provided by the parents/guardians, seated at low tables and chairs and supervised by the adults who gave assistance where it was needed and encouraged conversation with the children during mealtime. Perishable food items were stored in the service fridge.
- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the preschool room and outdoor area. They were able to explore several different interest areas while outdoors.
- In the playroom's the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of soft matting, cushions decorated with a canopy overhead in a designated cosy area.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills. Children had appropriate outdoor clothes to ensure outdoor play could take place regardless of the weather.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move around to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The adults were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them and responded to their requests. The adults interacted in a positive way with the children by sitting at their level, maintaining good eye contact, showing empathy and a good understanding of each child. The adults were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The environment supported each child's learning, development, and wellbeing as -

- The playrooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. There was a variety of play equipment and materials appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.
- The playrooms had various interest areas- farm, house, art, train, shop, reading, sensory, Montessori, building blocks and dress up. The various interest areas supported learning across all areas of development, fine motor skills, language development, cognitive development, sensory and imaginative development.
- There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and table-top activities.
- The walls of the playrooms were decorated with posters, family photos and the children's artwork.
- There were two enclosed outdoor play areas which catered for different interests at the same time.

### 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 firefighting 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 to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service with the last fire drill completed on 12/05/2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection system with the last annual service on 30/05/2025 and 26/09/2024 respectively.

(4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation procedures setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a part time service, for a maximum number of 42 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.