

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015MO097

**Name of Service:** Newport Community Childcare Ltd First Friends

**Address of Service:** Knocknageeha, Newport, Co. Mayo

**Eircode:** F28 T025

**Name of Registered Provider:** Fiona McGee

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 09/10/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	4	PM	-
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Early Years Inspectorate,  
TUSLA, Child and Family Agency,  
2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ.,  
Castlebar,  
Co. Mayo.

**Inspection undertaken by:** M Farrell

**Title:** 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).

**Conditions if applicable** Not Applicable

### Description of service

Newport Community Childcare Ltd First Friends is a community operated, sessional service located on the outskirts of Newport in County Mayo. The service is registered to provide sessional services to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age, between 9am to 12 midday. The premises is a single story converted building with two playrooms, a store room and sanitary facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the side and rear of the building accessible directly by through one of the playrooms.

### Staffing

There are three staff including relief staff in the service. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 24, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

*(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

- (2) It was confirmed through discussion with the designated person in charge and by review of records that there were three staff in the service at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documentation was available for the staff:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for one staff member. One written validated reference from a past employer for two staff.
  - (b) One written validated reference from sources other than a past employer for two staff members.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
  - (d) International police vetting documents were available for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the three staff who worked directly with the children.

### 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service throughout the inspection. On the inspector's announced arrival to the service there were 2 adults working directly with 4 children.
- (3) The minimum ratio for sessional services providing care to children over 2 ½ years of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with 4 children during the inspection.

### 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 staff worked closely with the four children engaging with them through play. The children spent most of the morning playing outdoors in the enclosed outdoor area. The outdoor area was well resourced with toys and had different ground cover such as grass, artificial grass and impact absorbent ground cover. One of the activities the children enjoyed was spray-painting pictures on paper attached to a wooden fence. The staff used the activity as a learning opportunity about naming colours and mixing colours as well as exploring the different shapes and objects the children drew. Another play activity involved playing 'shop' in the large wooden shop where toy money was used to 'buy' different products the children had for sale. The staff gave children opportunities to express their choices of activities for example asking them if they would now like to play outdoors and to do the spray-painting activity. When playing indoors, the children moved freely between the two playrooms and hallway with the staff following their preferred play activities. The staff informed the inspector that they followed children's emerging interests when planning and this was evidenced by written notes kept by the staff. The children played in groups at times but were free to play by themselves if they wanted to. For example, one child played in the outdoor covered sand area shovelling sand into plastic containers and making shapes while the others played on ride on toys. The toys and play equipment were accessible at low levels allowing the children to select and replace the items after use. There was an area with soft seating beside a book corner for children to rest in if they felt tired or wanted to relax.

Children were encouraged to be as independent as possible for example to put on their own coats when going outside to play and to use the toilet by themselves. The children were prompted to wash their hands, dry them with paper towels and dispose of the wastepaper in foot-pedal bins following playing outside, using the toilet and before eating. Aprons were provided to protect children's clothes during messy play such as painting. Boxes of tissues were available at low levels, and one child was observed to be directed by a staff to clean their nose when needed. The children's snacks were provided from home and stored in the

service's refrigerator. Lunchtime was midway through the session and was an unhurried, social experience with time for conversation between all the children and staff.

A positive approach was used by the staff to manage the children's behaviour and they displayed warmth in their interactions with the children and knowledge of their likes and dislikes. The staff alerted the children to upcoming transitions between activities such for example between outdoor play and lunchtime. A green sand timer was available in the playroom and the staff said it would be used if needed to help children with the concept of sharing. Short, simple playroom 'rules' were displayed in the hallway to direct children for example to be kind, share and help others. There was an emotions chart with photographs of children displaying different facial expressions for example being happy, sad, shy and loved on a door to help children discuss their feelings.

The service's daily routine was displayed in the service and followed on the day. The staff had created a family tree with photographs of the children and their families to help develop links for the children between home and the service. The children and staff were preparing to celebrate Halloween and had a discussion at lunchtime about what costumes they would wear.

Children had individual scrapbooks with written records of photographs and observations made by the staff of the children during activities which were to be shown to parents. At collection time, the staff were observed to chat warmly with parents/guardians and tell them about their child's day in the service. The staff told the inspector that an electronic messaging system was also used to help communicate with parents in addition to newsletters that were issued each term. Information leaflets were available for parents beside the entrance door regarding healthy eating and food choices for children

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The children in attendance during the inspection were checked in and out of the service by an employee. There were written records available for inspection in the service of the checking in and out of the children by the staff.
- (3) (a) The designated person in charge approved the entry of the inspector following review of identification documents.
- (b) Attendance details for the inspector were recorded in a visitor book which contained records for previous visitors to the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

### Compliance Information

The two staff were observed to supervise the four children during the inspection primarily by sight. The children were out of sight of the staff when using the toilet but within earshot if they needed help. The staff were beside the children supervising them closely when playing outdoors. At lunchtime, the staff were observed to sit with the children at a table while they were eating to supervise them.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

There was a certificate of insurance displayed for sessional services for the maximum number of children attending the service on a given day with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.