

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015SO059

Name of Service Stepping Stones Childcare

Address of Service: Easkey, Sligo, F26 C959

Email Address: steppingstoneseaskey@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Ashling Connor Munnelly

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time	✓	Sessional	✓
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary	

Proposed change:	Addition of one preschool room
Proposed Number of Children:	Change from 44 to 56 children
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	56 children
Registered change:	56 children

Date of Inspection:	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	4
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Inspection undertaken by: L Costello
Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: **Early Years Inspectorate,**
TUSLA Child & Family Agency,
Markievicz House,
Barrack St,
Sligo,
F91 XC84

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day Care Service for 56 children
Date of Registration	8 th May 2024

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Authority to Inspect

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

Description of Service	Stepping Stones Childcare is a privately owned and operated early years' service located in the rural village of Easkey on the Sligo coastline. The service currently provides sessional and part time care to children aged 2-6 years and operates during the school year. A school age service is also registered.
Premises	The service operates from a purposely converted primary school building. There are three care rooms one of which is used solely for the provision of school age care currently in operation. It is proposed that an additional care room will be in use for preschool children. There is sanitary accommodation adjacent to each of the preschool rooms with provision for nappy changing if required. An office, storage area and a kitchen are also available on site. The children have daily access to safe and suitable outdoor play area on the premises.
Staffing	There are a total of five staff members currently employed within the service who work directly with the children, this includes the registered provider.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a) There was a named designated person in charge and a named person appointed to deputise when required.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency, and

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The service currently has 26 preschool children enrolled to attend the service. It is proposed that 12 children will stay on for the proposed full day care with the 2 staff members. The service has a total of six staff employed in the service. The allocation of staff to children is accepted as meeting the required adult child ratios.

(2) The registered provider confirmed that they are aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 2 of Schedule 6 and will ensure that an adequate number of adults will at all times work directly with the number of children attending the service.

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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—
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages, and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (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.
- (2) A registered provider—
- (b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.
- (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 or
 - (b) where no such space is provided, the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis to an outdoor service
- (4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.
- (5) Where pre-school children attending a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre have access to an outdoor space other than such a space specified in paragraph 4, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable.

Requirement met:

(1)(a) This requirement has been met.

Having regard to the number and age range of preschool children which the service proposes to cater for and the amount of time they spend on the premises there were adequate and suitable indoor play facilities in the proposed additional room. The proposed playroom will cater for children aged 2 years and over.

The room was bright and a visually appealing space with an orderly arrangement of play equipment and materials set into clearly defined areas of interest. These included arts and crafts, construction, small world items, dress up props, play kitchen areas, library's, relaxing areas, problem solving toys and wide range of manipulate play

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resources. Open low level shelving units enabled all items to be readily accessible to the children and suitable sized tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities.

Adequate and suitable outdoor play facilities were in place. A fenced area at the side of the building was set aside for children’s play. Ground cover consisted of a combination of impact absorbent material, tarmacadam, and natural grass. The area was sufficient in size to accommodate large groups children to engage in energetic play. A climb and slide unit was available and a large storage shed contained physical play items such as ride on toys, balls, hoops, and seesaws. The area also contained resources that supported imaginary and messy play with a mud kitchen, plastic playhouses, and sand trays.

(1)(b)

Stackable floor beds were available for children to sleep and were equipped with appropriate bedding. The proposed room was resourced with suitable and comfortable rest areas including soft floor mats, soft cushions, and small tent canopies. This area facilitated children to rest throughout the day.

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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

Children’s meal requirements are to be provided by an outside caterer. Children will bring their morning snack from home and the service will provide early morning breakfast, dinner, and an afternoon snack. A sample menu was furnished which demonstrated a good variety of nutritional foods. The menu is to be periodically reviewed and updated. The service had made contact with the environmental health department to ensure compliance with food hygiene regulations.

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	A small kitchen was provided on site. This contained a fridge for storing perishable foods and each of the rooms had their own fridge to store children’s snacks brought in from home. The premises is connected to the main public water system. Drinks provided are water and milk.
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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.

Requirement met:	<p>This requirement has been met.</p> <p>The following measures were noted on the day of inspection to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of children and to ensure that the environment of the service was safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions were made to prevent children exiting unsupervised and adults gaining unauthorised entry to the facility by way of secure entry and exit points. • The single entrance gate to the outdoor play facility contained a lock mechanism to ensure children could not leave unsupervised or unauthorised access could be gained. • Emergency exit routes were free from obstruction. • The outdoor play area was fully enclosed with metal-based grid fencing throughout. • Toys and equipment appeared in good condition, appropriate for the proposed age group of children and free from obvious hazards. • Suitable hand washing facilities including liquid soap and single use paper towels were provided in the children’s and adults sanitary accommodation and in the preschool rooms. • Thermostatically controlled warm water was available in all wash hand basins accessible to children. • Nappy changing units were provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.
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- The premises and play equipment was visibly clean. Cleaning schedules were in place and contained details on each of the areas within the preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation to be cleaned, the frequency of cleaning and the method used.
- Cleaning equipment and materials were stored in a designated storage area that was secured and not accessible to children.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of waste material.
- Ventilation was provided in each preschool room and in the sanitary accommodation by way of openable windows.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirements of this regulation were met.

(1) There was one staff member with up-to-date training in first aid for children up till 5th May 2024. This staff member was rostered to be on site at all times during the hours of operation. The registered provider confirmed that other would be trained to allow for cover in the event of an unexpected absence.

(2)(a) (b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box on site which was available and accessible at all times.

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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.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirements of this regulation were met.</p> <p>(1)(a) There was a written record of fire drills that had taken place with the children which were detailed monthly. The last fire drill in the service was 19 March 2024.</p> <p>(b) There was documentation detailing the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system in the building. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms was last serviced on the 19th of March 2024.</p> <p>(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the preschool room.</p>
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:	<p>An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to this inspection.</p> <p>The Registered Provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the service. The service approval is contingent on the registered providers compliance with Regulation 28.</p>
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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated, and ventilated,
- (d) cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

- (a) The service operates from a detached single-story building renovated for the purposes of providing an early years' service. The registered provider confirmed that they had no knowledge of any structural defects on the building and on superficial visual inspection, the building appeared of sound and stable structure with no visible defects.
- (b) The proposed additional room was adequately secured to prevent children exiting unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining entry.
- (c) An adequate source of heating was provided in the service and sanitary accommodation. This consisted of an oil-fired central heating. The air temperature in the proposed playroom on the day of inspection registered within the recommended 18 -22°C range. The lighting was provided by natural light leading from openable windows supplemented with 6 fluorescent ceiling light fittings with protective covers. The preschool room and sanitary accommodation was ventilated by openable windows.
- (d) The proposed care room appeared to be in a good state of repair and was clean on the day of inspection with walls freshly painted. The building was connected to a mains water supply providing appropriate drinking water for staff and children and running water for cleaning.
- (e) The sanitary facilities in the service were adequately equipped with wash hand basins and toilets for the number of children that will be in attendance. There were eight toilets, seven wash hand basins and two nappy changing stations available for children's use within the service. In addition to this, there was one toilet and one wash

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hand basin available for staff use. Thermostatically controlled hot and cold water was available in all hand wash basins accessible to children.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) *Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*
- (4) *Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*
 (a) *a sessional pre-school service, and*
 (b) *a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*
- (5) *A registered provider of a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a minimum of 2 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

- (1) Adequate clear floor space has been provided for the work, play and movement of children.
- (2) The size of the proposed preschool room ensured that the required floor space was met for the 12 proposed children attending. The floor space measured 63.64m²