

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY082
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Wilmot's Childcare
-------------------------	--------------------

Address of Service:	Castle Oak, Dark Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	E45 X206
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Rosemary Wilmot
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	14/09/2023
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	54
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
---	---

Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
----------------------------------	------------

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

This service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years on a sessional, part-time or full day care basis. The service also operates a registered school aged care service for children attending national school.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 7.15am – 6.15pm for 51 weeks of the year. A sessional service, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 38 weeks of the year for eligible children.

The service is operated from a purpose built, single storey, detached premises in a residential area in the town of Nenagh in north Tipperary. The service also has two, single room modular units at the back of the premises. The service consists of seven activity rooms, sanitary accommodation areas, sleep rooms, office, kitchen, staff room and outdoor play areas. The modular units function as activity spaces for the early years children in the morning while the second unit is used by the school aged children in the afternoon.

This is a sister service to Wilmot’s Childcare in Annacotty, Co. Limerick.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but visits the service every week and is available to call on when required. The registered provider was present in the service on the day of inspection. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis supported by two supervisors. There are 26 staff who work directly with the children each day. Ancillary staff include catering, cleaning and maintenance personnel.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4)(7), 11(1)(4)(8), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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 registered provider, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

The staff files of four staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 24 August 2021 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. Staff files for other staff had been reviewed previously and found to be compliant.

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of the four members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of two members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant records were maintained on file.

(4) Staff who worked with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education. The four new members of staff held qualifications at levels 5 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

(7) The service had a manager and two supervisors who were responsible for providing supervision to staff to support them in their practice, curriculum development, observations, record keeping and continuing education. One of the supervisors was designated to work with staff caring for children under three years old while the other supervisor worked with staff caring for children over three years old. Supervisors met staff informally each day when they provided relief in the rooms during staff breaks. They held scheduled meetings with room leaders each term and were available to meet with staff when requested.

The service management team were proactive in supporting staff and improving the service through engagement with outside services for training and advice. For example, one member of staff had undertaken floor play training with an occupational therapist in August 2023 and the service was waiting for a visit from Better Start following their request for same.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting had not been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state. It is acknowledged that the police vetting was subsequently sought and acquired. Relevant documents were sent to the early years inspector to review on 28 September 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting has been received in respect of one staff member identified on inspection as requiring it. We will ensure that police vetting will be received for any staff member who has worked outside the state before they commence work in our service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting documents submitted to early years inspector for review on 28 September 2023.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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.
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), 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 ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).
- (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) There were 63 children aged between 8 months and 5 years present in the service on the morning of the inspection. The children were divided between six activity rooms and supervised by 15 staff. There were also two supervisors and the service manager available to provide relief in the rooms when required. In the afternoon the number of children had reduced to 54 divided between 5 activity rooms and supervised by 13 staff. Additional staff were present in the afternoon to work with the school aged children who were present in the service.
- (2) and (4) The service maintained the adult to child ratios at above the minimum requirements throughout the day.
- (8)(a) There were at least two staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

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.

(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)(a) The service, including the main building and two modular units, provided eight activity rooms for use by the early years children. One of the rooms in the main building was exclusively used by school aged children. The modular units were designated as 'under 3s' and 'over 3s'. The modular unit for the children aged under 3 was used by children from the baby, crawler and toddler rooms as well as by children doing one to one work or who needed sensory play. The modular unit for children aged over 3 was available to children from Zog's, Gruffalo and Hungry Caterpillars rooms in the morning. This meant that all children attending the service had access to at least two different indoor environments each day, as well as access to outdoor play.

(b) There was a cosy seating area in each room where the children could rest and relax away from the general play areas during the day. There were also two sleep rooms: one off the baby room and the other off the crawler room, where children aged under 2 could sleep in cots during the day, according to their individual sleep needs. Camp beds were set up in the toddler room after dinner for children aged over 2 years who wanted to sleep at that time. The camp beds were available for use throughout the day if needed by a child who wanted to sleep.

(3) The outdoor play area was divided into five distinct spaces for use by different age groups of children attending the service. There were three main areas, with the middle space divided into three. The area at the far left of the site was used by children from the toddler room. This area had a soft fall surface and was enclosed by wooden fencing and gates.

The main section at the back of the premises had a tarmacadam surface and two modular buildings. The area beside the over 3's building was used by the older children. The area beside the under 3's building had been covered to provide shelter for play in all weathers. This space was used by the children from the baby and crawler rooms. It was planned to develop a separate area for use by the babies. The area in front of the under 3s building was used by children from Hungry Caterpillars room and the area to the far right of the premises, which had a grass surface, was used by the children from Gruffalo and Zog's rooms. The children were observed playing outside several times during the day.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service was well furnished and equipped. Each room contained sufficient tables, chairs, soft furnishings and resources for the number of children who used each room, suitable to their age and stage of development. For example, in the baby room there were several areas for floor play with carpet or padded mats as well as highchairs for mealtimes. There were wooden chairs with splayed feet for extra stability used in the crawler room where the tables were low and enabled the children aged 1 – 2 years to sit comfortably for meals and tabletop activities. Disco cushions and wobble stools were available in the rooms used by older children to help develop their balance and improve concentration when engaged in seated activities.

Toys and materials were displayed on open shelving units in defined interest areas which helped to guide the children's play and exploration and also aided them to find where to put things at tidy up time. Art and craft supplies were stored on trolleys in the corridor where they were accessible to each room when needed. This was in addition to mark making materials available in each room.

The under 3's/sensory room was set up with padded mats fitted to the floor and walls in half the room while the other half had vinyl flooring. Equipment and materials included a rebounder, sofa, chair, play kitchen, wooden climbing unit and slide, blackout blinds, light and water tubes, boxes of sensory materials and a stereo unit. The outdoor areas were equipped with mud kitchens, planting areas, water tables, slides, climbing equipment, special interest tuff tray tables, balls, ride on toys and push toys.

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.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Parents supplied most of the foods eaten by children while attending the service including morning and afternoon snacks. Infant formula was also supplied by parents, brought in made up in individual bottles, in line with best practice guidance, then refrigerated in the baby room until needed.

The service employed a chef to prepare and serve the midday dinner. Dinners were planned on a two-week menu basis. Dinner on the day of inspection was pasta and vegetables in a tomato-based sauce. Water or milk were served with meals. Children brought their own drink bottles each day that were refilled with water when empty and stored where the children could easily access them when they wanted a drink.

All staff were aware of children who had any food allergies or intolerances and a list was maintained in the kitchen as well as in each room. The service had a 'nut free' policy regarding all foods prepared in the service as well as any foods brought into the service by the 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.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure of the children in their room. Children entered the premises through the door that opened into the outdoor play area from their room. Paper based attendance records were maintained in each room.

(3)(a) No person could enter the service without permission from a member of staff. Visitors had free access to the entrance lobby and office but further access to the premises was through doors with electronic locking systems which could only be opened by staff.

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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service maintained in each room in relation to that room. The most recent fire drill was carried out on 14 August 2023.
- (b) A written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained and kept in the office of the service. The annual servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms was carried out in January 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency were displayed on a wall in each room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for up to 105 children present at any one time valid until 31 August 2024, which was sufficient to cover the maximum number of children that were present on a daily basis.