

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY160
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Name of Service:	Wonder Years Playschool
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Address of Service:	5 Baron Park, Clonmel, Tipperary
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Eircode:	E91 EK53
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Whelan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/04/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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
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Description of service

Wonder Years Playschool is located in a ground floor extension of a two-storey semi-detached private residence in the town of Clonmel. A sessional service is offered from 8:50am to 12:00pm and a part-time service from 8:50am to 1:50pm. The service caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years of age. The premises consists of a single early years room, sanitary accommodation and outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were three staff members working directly with children on the day of inspection, which included the registered provider. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, and 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included time spent indoors and outdoors.

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, 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

Files were reviewed for each of the three staff members employed in the service and the registered provider.

(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) A certificate of qualification was available on file demonstrating that all staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: policy on healthy eating, policy on the administration of medication, policy on infection control and the policy on managing behaviour in the service. These policies and procedures were appropriate and specific to the setting.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(2) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 9 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 3 staff members during the morning sessional service. While 6 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 2 staff members in the afternoon.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (i)

Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and/or guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form contained all the required information for parents and/or guardians to complete. Child registration forms for each child who attended the service were reviewed on the day of inspection, and all were completed in full, with appropriate declarations signed by parents and/or guardians.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (k)

The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. Staff information, the class of service registered, adult: child ratios, type of care programme, facilities, hours and fees were available in the parent’s handbook and service information folder. Policies and procedures of the service were available onsite. Staff rosters were available on a notice board.

Records of attendance, administration of medication and any accident or incident records were maintained by the registered provider.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Information for parents was available in several locations, namely: parent’s handbook provided to new families entering the service, on information notice boards, and in the services policies and procedures.

The information provided to parents proposing to register their children in the service included: the details of staff members, the age profile of children who the service caters for, class of service and the hours which are on offer.

Details of the services policies and procedures and adult to child ratios. Details of the facilities and the programme of activities and care provided were available and accessible to proposed parents.

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

The indoor areas were bright, warm, and homely. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of works of art and their recent learning. A meaningful wall display on shapes documented the children's learning. Additionally, individual learning journals were displayed for children to engage with, these recorded each child's learning throughout the year with photographs and art creations.

Visual displays in the service were multifunctional, a child registration system was in place where children could identify who was in attendance and who was absent.

This display was also used to assign children to learning groups, to promote friendship and discussion. A detailed visual schedule was used to assist children to predict the routine of the day and support transitions from one activity to the next.

Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest. Children could freely access materials and resources from the shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner, small world play, arts and crafts and puzzles areas of the room.

Children's literacy development was promoted with two well-resourced library areas. The first area consisted of soft wipeable couches and low-level book storage accessible to the children. A second area stored books for staff members to read with the children.

Outdoors children were observed to engage in a range of activities. Wheeled toys and balance bicycles were available for use. A large mud kitchen and adjacent sand tray provided opportunity to engage in role play and messy play. Children were observed to engage in a range of gross motor skills such as climbing on the timber climbing frame and slide.