

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD063
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Name of Service:	Passage East Childcare Initiative
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Address of Service:	Crooke Road, Passage East, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 D620
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Millea
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.
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
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Description of service

Passage East Childcare T/A Lios na Nóg is a community based childcare service located in the fishing village of Crooke approximately 10 kilometers from Waterford City. The service is a purpose-built childcare facility on the grounds of the national school in Crooke. The premises accommodates two childcare rooms, adult and children's toilets, a nappy changing area and a separate room for chemicals and cleaning agents. The outdoor play area is safely secured on the grounds of the premises. The service offers full day care from 08:00hrs to 17:30hrs for children aged two years and upwards and participates in Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE).

Staffing

The service employs a manager who is part of the staff compliment as well as six childcare workers.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play.

Regulation 22 – Food and drink.

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

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.

Additional Information

A recommendation was sent to the Better Start National Early Years Quality Development service with the consent of the registered provider on 25 June 2024.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the co-operation 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

(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, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The manager was the designated person in charge. The service also had an assistant manager who was able to deputise as required.
 - (b) At all times during the inspection the manager was on the premises.
 - (c) Passage East Childcare was governed by a voluntary management committee. There was documentation available that demonstrated the management structure for the service which identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service.

(2)

All seven staff files were reviewed since the last inspection on the 17 February 2021, there were four new staff members employed to work with the children.

The following was observed on the new staff members files:

- (a) There were six written validated references from past employers.
- (b) Not applicable as all written references were from past employers.

(c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána on file for all new staff working directly with the children in the service and all other staff had been re-vetted in the last three years.

(d) One staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months, police vetting had been completed from this jurisdiction.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5, 6 or 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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 an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service, which met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)
On the morning of the inspection there were 21 pre-school children directly supervised by 5 staff members. In the Junior room there were 4 children, aged 2 to 3 years, directly cared for by 2 staff members. In the Pre-school room there were 18 children aged 3 to 5 years of age, directly cared for by 3 staff members.

During the afternoon, there were 14 pre-school children directly supervised by 5 staff members. The numbers were as follows:

In the Junior room there were 4 children, aged 2 to 3 years directly cared for by 2 staff members.

In the Preschool room there were 12 children aged 3 to 5 years of age directly cared for by 3 staff members.

Throughout the day the manager worked as part of the staff compliment.

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)
There was evidence on the day of the inspection that all child records required under Regulation 15 1 (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) were available in respect of each child attending the service. These were recorded on template record sheets. On sampling three of these records, it was observed that all sections of the forms were completed. Each of the children's records had written parental consent from parents or guardians for appropriate medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

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) There were two pre-school rooms available on the premises, the Junior room and the pre-school room. The junior room catered for children aged from 2 to 3 years of age. The preschool room catered for children from 3 to 5 years of age, this was the larger room and was carefully planned and zoned to provide easy access to the well-resourced toy environment. The special areas of interest included a home corner, messy play area, construction station and tabletop area where children had ample supplies of blocks, plastic and manipulative play materials. All toys and equipment in both rooms were appropriate for the developmental stages and ages of the children attending. There were two large well filled sand tables open throughout the day in the pre- school room, the children engaged enthusiastically in small groups around these tables.
- (b) Both rooms had generously defined rest areas with rubber foam couches defined by foam matting and bookshelves. Two children slept in the afternoon, for this the toddler room was converted into a sleep room for this duration with mattresses placed on the floor of the rest area in this room. The remaining children joined the children in the pre-school room, this was observed to work well on the day of the inspection.

(3)

(a) There were three designated outdoor play spaces that were safe and securely fenced off from the national school and surrounding roadside. The three outdoor spaces were accessible from the building and one area had wheelchair access from the main pre-school room. A variety of outdoor play surfaces included; soft matting, grass, and tarmacadam. These areas offered different opportunities and experiences depending on the age, stage and development of the children such as, a large, grassed area for the older children and the soft matted area that had an activity frame with challenging opportunities for climbing and sliding for the younger pre-school age group. The tarmacadam area had a variety of playground games and activity markings such as hopscotch. This surface was observed to work well for the ample supply of trikes, bicycles, and ride on equipment.

There was an outdoor room that provided a sheltered space for a wellington rack and for the storage of children's waterproof pull-ups. The room was also used for the play needs of the children if they chose to take a break from the playgrounds.

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

All foods given to the children were sent from home and were prepared and reheated for serving to the children in a food preparation area in the corner of the main pre-school room. The manager reported that the food preparation area had been recently inspected by the Health Services Executive (HSE) Environmental Health Services. There was a comprehensive healthy eating policy available with ideas and suggestions for parents.

Breakfast operates from 08:00hrs to 09:00hrs every day for pre-school and school age children. The main meal was offered from 13:30hrs and snacks were given at 10:30hrs and 15:00hrs. Some of the hot foods observed on the day for the main meal were pasta dishes, shepherd's pie and chicken risotto. Snacks observed were mainly sandwiches, cheese and crackers, sausage rolls, and fresh fruit such as bananas, strawberries and grapes. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the day.

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.

Compliance Information

GENERAL SAFETY:

The external play area was secured from the road with high-level galvanised fencing. There was a large gate at the entrance to the property to prevent unauthorised access from the roadway or children gaining unsupervised access to the road. The main front door was secured to restrict children from exiting the building unsupervised, and from preventing unauthorised persons gaining access to the service.

All cleaning agents were stored on a high-level shelf in a locked utility room. Electrical sockets were fitted with safety covers. Heat emitting appliances were covered with heater guards. Cord blinds were secured with safety devices. Attendance records were completed daily for the staff and for the children attending.

Infection Control:

The following measures were taken in the service in relation to infection control. Hand washing facilities were provided in the children’s toilet area with a supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. Hand washing was observed being carried out with the children before eating, after toileting and after messy play. Supplies of tissues were readily available both indoors and outdoors and foot pedalled lidded bins were supplied in various locations for the waste disposal of these. There were daily and weekly cleaning records documented and displayed in all the areas used by the children and staff. These were completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

No medications were observed being administered on the day of the inspection. Protocols were in place for the administration of prescribed medicines if needed. On the day of inspection, one child attending the service was prescribed an inhaler, evidence of parental consent was available. Documentation on previous records were reviewed by the inspector were observed to be counter signed by two staff on administration.

Safe Sleep:

Toddler sleep requirements were facilitated in their own room that was part of the toddler space which converted into a rest room between the hours of 12:30hrs and 14:30hrs. The room was well ventilated and 10-minute checks were observed being carried out by the staff.

Non-Compliance Information

GENERAL SAFETY:

The outdoor play space had soft sponge matting under the large activity frame. This matting had contracted from the edges of the cement path to cause a gap of 10 to 20 centimetres in parts. This gap could present as a trip risk to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response on the 14 August 2024 that the service was closing for the summer break on Friday 26 July. The Registered Provider spoke to a builder who will come when closed and repair the area concerned.

Communication by email and telephone from the registered provider on 21 August in response to the builder's report indicated that advise to remove the soft play surface and replace it with astroturf was required. Therefore, the registered provider informed that the area would be inaccessible to children until this work is completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Correspondence from a building company with an opinion to rectify the problem was submitted to the inspectorate on the 21 August.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted to address the non-compliance did not address the trip risk. Therefore, a plan to commence the replacement of the play surface over the coming weeks will be implemented and evidence will be submitted to the Inspectorate as soon as the works are completed and thereby reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The service provided evidence that five of the six staff employed to work directly with the children had current First Aid Responder Training completed in February 2023. The manager stated that this training was sponsored by Passage East Childcare T/A Lios na Nóg and the training was delivered on site to ensure that at least three staff trained in first aid were available at all times during the operational hours of the service.

(2)
(a) There were two a first aid box stored in the kitchenette areas of each room.
(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available at all times

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 record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 21 May 2024.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 25 September 2023.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the main hall

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) There was no record maintained on the checks on the smoke alarms in the building.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response on the 14 August 2024 that committee were awaiting a response from the Fire Chief from Waterford City and County to advise on the smoke alarm system. Further to a telephone conversation with the registered provider on the 21 August 2021 informed that the holiday period was likely to be the reason for delays in the response from Fire Chief from Waterford City and County.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the referral and a response from the chief fire officer in Waterford City and County was submitted on the 21 August 2024.

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Summary Comment

All evidence submitted to address the non-compliances, and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection.