

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH017
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Name of Service:	Waddlers and Toddlers
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Address of Service:	Winetown South, Rathowen, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 AH01
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Anderson
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date 1 of Inspection:	30/01/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	31/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	41
Day 2	AM	43	PM	38

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy
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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

The service is registered as a full day care service for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated by an independent provider. The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey adapted residential premises. Three pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a kitchen and an office are provided in the main building. A general-purpose cabin is located in the rear of the premises. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. On site parking and set down facilities are provided. The service is located in a rural setting on the outskirts of the village of Rathowen, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered provider, deputy and nine other adults were present and working directly with the children during the inspection on 30 and 31 January 2024.

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.

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 co-operation of the registered provider, deputy, staff and children who were present on the days 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.*

(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

(1)(a)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider and deputy were both present for the duration of the inspection.

Eleven staff files were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members held a major award at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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.

(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)

The ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were forty-eight children attending the service supervised directly by eleven adults on 30 January 2024.
There were forty-three children attending the service supervised directly by eleven adults on 31 January 2024.

(8)(a)

The roster indicated that at least two adults were available on the premises throughout the hours of operation.

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)
In a sample review of twenty-five child records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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;*
- (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)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

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 a parent handbook and shared with parents prior to commencement in the service in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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)

A menu plan was available in the service. The service provides breakfast if required. All snacks and meals are provided to children attending on a full day care basis and prepared fresh on site by a staff member. The parents provide the healthy snack to children attending the ECCE session. The main meal is served in the afternoon and on 30 January 2024 this consisted of roast beef, mashed potato, mixed vegetables and gravy. A choice of water or milk was observed to be offered to the children with all snacks and meals.

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during snack and mealtimes. Children used the toilet independently and regular hand washing was observed.

The children were encouraged to be independent and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities.

The staff demonstrated respect and warmth towards the children in their care. The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used and eye contact. The staff responded to the children with interest and providing regular praise and encouragement throughout the inspection. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection.

The pre-school rooms were laid out with areas of interest. Low level tables, chairs and low-level shelving with equipment were available to all children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available for all children. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

Younger children were observed to explore their environment and crawl and play on the soft matting provided. Younger children slept in a in a restful atmosphere in the sleep room and were physically checked every ten minutes by staff. Regular nappy changes were carried out as required for children attending the baby/wobbler and toddler rooms. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. A verbal handover was completed at the beginning and end of sessions to support communication between the service and each child's family. A written record was maintained for children under the age of one between the service and the home. A parent notice board is displayed in the entrance hall of the service.

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 19 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)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sand play, water play and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room was provided for children to rest and sleep on an individual need's basis. The sleep room was equipped with five cots. Children were observed to sleep on low level beds in the toddler room. Soft furnishings were available in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

A high-level wire and wooden fence secured the perimeter of the outdoor area. A synthetic grass area provided opportunities for all weather play. A natural grass area was available for use during periods of dry weather.

Toys and equipment included a toy kitchen, a climb/slide unit, a building area and a variety of bikes and trikes.

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 main entrance door was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector completed the visitor log on arrival.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. All toys and materials were easily cleanable.

Warm running water, liquid soap and hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation.

Children were observed to wash their hands before all snacks and meals and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school room and in the sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Openable windows were provided in the pre-school room.

Refrigeration facilities were available in the service for the storage of perishable food stuffs, feeding bottles and soothers.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in a secure location in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. In the sleep room children were physically checked by a staff member every ten minutes. In the toddler room a staff member was observed to sit and physically check sleeping children every ten minutes. The recorded environmental temperatures of both the sleep room and the toddler room were 19 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were unobstructed from the premises. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings were not carried out from the service.

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)

Five staff members were qualified in First Aid Response (FAR) and rostered to be available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in each of the pre-school rooms.

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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 8 January 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in March 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced in January 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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

Children were supervised by staff during play activities and rest periods in the three pre-school rooms and in the sleep room during the inspection. Staff were observed to supervise children when using the toilet and handwashing. Staff were observed to hand over the child to their parent/guardian from the pre-school rooms at collection time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.