

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH074		
Name of Service:	Irene's Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Mullingar FC, Gainstown, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 D889		
Name of Registered Provider:	Irene Murphy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes		
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 Early Years' Service provides a sessional service operated by a private provider. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 09:00-12:00 Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a pre-school room on the first floor of the local Football Club in Gainstown, Mullingar, Co Westmeath. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor space for outdoor play. Onsite parking facilities are available.

Staffing

The registered provider and a staff member were present and working directly with the children on the 17 April 2024. A relief staff member is available for cover in the service if required.

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 cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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,*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Three staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of the staff members.

Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

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

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member or the registered provider had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The adults working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)

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

(3)

There were eight children attending the service supervised directly by the registered provider and the staff member.

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)
Eleven children are enrolled in the service. 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) and (j).

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 and detailed the information for parents required for 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

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 in respect of (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)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service with soft music playing in the background of the pre-school room. Children enjoyed a morning walk on the grounds of the GAA pitch supervised by the registered provider and staff member. The children were actively engaged in the morning activities that included the life

cycle of the butterfly, tabletop activities, singing songs and free play.

A healthy snack was provided by the parents consisting of sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit with water to drink. Children sat at tables eating their snacks enjoying conversations and interactions with each other and the staff. Children used the toilet independently and assistance was given by staff as required. Children were encouraged to be independent as they put on their coats in preparation for collection time by the parents.

Staff members were positive towards children as they used individual names, eye contact and gave positive praise on completion of activities. Staff were familiar with each child and their personalities.

The service worked in partnership with parents, a verbal handover is given to parents and guardians at collection time. A short messaging system (SMS) is used to share the children's daily work and play activities with parents. An open introduction day is held to familiarize new children commencing in the service for the new pre-school term. Children's artwork, writing books, numbers and shapes are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. The service maintains a learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities throughout the year.

The physical and material environment was laid out with low level tables and chairs and low-level shelving with materials easily accessible to the children. A cosy rest area was available in the pre-school room with reading books nearby. A play kitchen with utensils, dolls house, a play theatre and art easel were available to children. Materials included paint, books, dolls, puzzles, blocks, trucks, cars, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

Children's artwork and family wall with photographs were displayed in the pre-school room.

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.

General Safety:

The gates to the GAA grounds were closed on the inspector's arrival to the service. The front door to the service was locked and secure to keep the children safe within. A coded system and bell were in place for access to the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Indoor and outdoor safety checklists were available and reviewed.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning records were available and reviewed. Warm water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation in the service. The temperature of the water at the wash hand basins was recorded at 33 degrees Celsius.

Openable windows provided natural ventilation in the sanitary accommodation. A pedal bin was located in the sanitary accommodation and pre-school room for the hygienic disposal of waste. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after toileting.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. The medication administration book reviewed had no record of medication administered to date.

Fire Safety:

The fire escape routes were unobstructed from the pre-school room. A fire drill was carried out during the inspection. Staff and children were familiar with the fire drill procedure and evacuated to the fire assembly point to the front of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated the service did not undertake outings.

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 registered provider and staff member were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was located in the pre-school room.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 fire fighting 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 fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 17 April 2024.

(b)
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced on the 28 August 2023 and 7 September 2023 respectively.

(4)

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

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. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.