

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH080
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Name of Service:	Lir Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Tir Croughan, Mullingar Road, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 A3KV
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	3	PM	NA
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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
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Description of service

This Early Years' Service provides a sessional service for children with an intellectual disability and is one of a multiple operated by Muiríosa Foundation Limited by Guarantee. The service operates on a Monday to Friday basis from the 10:00 to 13:00. The premises consist of a playroom, a sensory room, a kitchen and an office. A one-to-one room for therapeutic purposes has been put in place since the last inspection on the 2 February 2023. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking facilities are located to the side of the premises. The service is located in Kinnegad, Co Westmeath.

Staffing

The service employs four staff members. The designated person in charge and two staff members were present on the 9 September 2025. The registered provider does not work with children

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations

Regulation 8 Change in Circumstance

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3) (4)

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child (1) (a) (b)

Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play (1) (a) (b) (4)

Regulation 22 Food and Drink

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24 Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b)

Regulation 26 Fire safety measures (1) (4)

Regulation 28 Insurance

Regulation 33 Furnishing of Information to Agency

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The registered provider informed the TUSLA registration office in respect of a change in circumstance in the change of the registered provider, person in charge, change in email address and Eircode.

This change was accepted by the registration office on the 8 September 2025.

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*

(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)

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

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

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

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the four staff members and the registered provider.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the five staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for one adult had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5,6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be the 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.*
- (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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3)
There were three children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults.

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*
- A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)(b)
- There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. The three children attending the service were closely assisted, supported and monitored by attentive staff members. Staff were familiar with each child's personality and individual care needs which were attended to by staff in a calm and caring manner throughout the morning

session. Individual education plans were in place for each child in association with their parents or guardians, the service and the Early Intervention Multidisciplinary team.

A key person system is in operation in the service. A bibliography of staff was noted in the front hall of the service. Staff were attentive to children using soft language tones, maintaining eye contact during interactions and conversations with children and responding to children's nonverbal cues. Lámh, a manual sign system was used as a communication method for some children. A communication switch system was in place for assistance with communication with some children. A child who was new to the service was observed to settle in well as the service followed their settling in policy. An upset child was given hugs and cuddles by a staff member which provided comfort and reassurance. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff members as staff worked well together.

The staff member was observed to request permission to change the child's nappy and sang songs during the nappy changing to relax the child during the procedure. Children wore aprons to protect their clothes at snack times. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and were assisted as needed by the staff. The staff member followed the service procedures for the administration of the percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feed. Children were observed to rest and relax on soft furnishings in the playroom and in the sensory room.

The service implements a specialised curriculum for children with special needs which has just commenced at the start of the pre-school year. There is an open-door policy in place for parents as the service works in partnership with parents and guardians. A verbal handover was observed at collection time. Staff stated one to one meetings with parents or guardians are arranged as required.

The physical and material environment was laid out to meet the individual developmental needs of the children attending the service in the playroom, sensory room and in the outdoor play area.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The equipment provided was suitable for children attending the service as it was tailored to meet each child's developmental requirement. Play equipment included creative and manipulative materials, musical instruments, sensory toys and a trampoline for therapeutic purposes in the playroom. A ball pool, swing, climbing mats were available to children in the sensory room.

(b)

Soft furnishings provided facilities for rest and relaxation in the playroom and in the sensory room.

(4)

The outdoor play area was safe and secured by a high-level fence and gate surrounding the perimeter. Play equipment included a slide, cars, scooters, sand play and a trampoline for therapeutic purposes.

A new absorbent surface was noted in the outdoor play area since the last inspection on the 2 February 2023.

A shed was available for the storage of play equipment.

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

Parents provided healthy snacks for the children attending the service on a sessional basis. Lunches consisted of ham sandwiches, toast, cheese and a selection of fruit with juice to drink.

The nutrition feeds were stored correctly for children requiring PEG feeding.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

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 to the service was secure. Access to the service is by means of a doorbell for entry to the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. A health and safety audit is carried out on a monthly basis and was available for review.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were in place and maintained. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation and the nappy changing area.

The temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 33.8 degrees Celsius.

The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out correctly as per the service's nappy changing policy.

Windows provided natural ventilation in the playroom and nappy changing area.

Mechanical ventilation was in operation in the sanitary accommodation.

Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Specific medication suitable to the child's individual needs were available and stored safely in the playroom. Correct procedures were in place for the administration of medication.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted to the side of the service. Personal emergency evacuation plans were available for each child in the service.

Outing:

The designated person in charge stated outings are not undertaken from the service.

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, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

A visitor log for the service was available for review with the following details included.

- Date.
- Person's name.
- Contact number.
- Reason for entry.
- The name of person who approved access.
- The check in and out times.

(4)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year by 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)

Three adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A stocked first aid box was located in the playroom in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the 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 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 the 24 July 2025. The designated person in charge state a fire drill would be carried out when the children were settled into the service.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in September 2025. The firefighting equipment were serviced in February 2025.

(4)

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documents reviewed indicated that insurance was in place for the children enrolled.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge furnished the required information for the inspection.