

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX044
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Name of Service:	Eleanor's Preschool and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	10 The Chase, Coolcotts, Wexford, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 C93P
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eleanor Connolly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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 full day care service is located in a housing estate on the outskirts of Wexford town. A service is provided to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm. The premises is a two-story semi-detached house. The service consists of three preschool rooms. On the ground floor there is a toddler room, a junior preschool room. There is a senior preschool room on the first floor of the service. There are four toilets, a staff toilet, nappy changing facilities, a kitchenette, and an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

There were nine staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the children held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19 Health, welfare, and development of child
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child
Regulation 25 First aid
Regulation 26 Fire Safety
Regulation 29 Premises

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

(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) (b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and examination of documents in the service it was established there were nine staff including the registered provider employed in the service. All nine staff files were examined on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were 16 written and validated references available on file from past employers. There were two written and validated references available for the registered provider which did not require to be validated.

- (c)
There was evidence of Garda vetting available on file in the service for all nine staff members.
- (d)
Police vetting was available on file for two staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)
There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children at all times for the duration of the inspection.
- At 10.15 am
- Junior ecce room**
There were 13 children in the care of 4 staff. (All aged between 3 and 4 years).
- Toddler room**
There were 4 children in the care of 1 staff. (All aged between 1 and 2 years).
- Senior ecce room**
There were 15 children in the care of 4 staff. (All aged between 3 and 6 years).
- At 2.30 pm

Junior ecce room

There were 13 children in the care of 2 staff. (All aged between 3 and 4 years).

Toddler room

There were 4 children in the care of 1 staff. (All aged between 1 and 2 years).

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 was maintained at all times during the inspection.

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*
- (1) 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)

The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service.

Children in the junior ecce room enjoyed outdoor play on the morning of the inspection. Staff were observed to be kind and attentive to the children during their time in the outdoor area. Children were encouraged to take turns on the ride on toys and share with their friends. A group of children were observed formulating their own game in the mud kitchen area. One child was observed to pretend to be the boss and told the other children what their job was. The children were allowed to develop their own imaginary games with the supervision and support of the staff present.

Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service prioritised outdoor play for the children attending the service. The children were dressed warmly with coats, hats and wellies. The inspector noted the staff had been provided with dry robes by the registered provider. Staff said these dry robes ensured they were warm when outdoor with the children.

Children were observed during circle time in the senior ecce room. They were made comfortable on the floor and couch in the room and had stories read for them. Staff were observed to be kind and took the time to pause when children asked questions about the story and asked to see the pictures. One staff member was observed to initiate a balloon game with the children. A balloon was blown up. The children were shown how to pass the balloon to each other through their legs and then over their shoulders. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this game encouraged motor development for the children.

In the junior ecce room children enjoyed free play after lunch. The children were engaged in a variety of table top activities such as peg boards, small world imaginative toys, animal and fire trucks. The children in the senior ecce room had made cupcakes for valentines day. One child was observed taking their cupcake home for their mother at the end of the morning session in the service. The transitions between activities were calm, the staff gave the children prompts. The children washed their hands before their afternoon snack, set the table with their individual place mats and helped give out their water bottles to their friends.

(b)
Parents provided all snacks and hot meals for the children attending the service which were stored in fridges available in the service. Children in the junior ecce room were observed having their dinner at 12.00pm. Children had a variety of hot meals including spaghetti bolognese and pasta with vegetables and sauce. Children had access to drinking water at all times and staff were observed encouraging children to drink throughout the duration of the inspection.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service used a mobile phone application to communicate with parents. Staff helped children change into dry clothes after playing in the outdoor area ensuring they were comfortable at all times when attending the service.

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

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was locked on arrival. The fire doors were not obstructed. The outdoor area was secure.

Infection Control

Nappy changing procedures observed on the day were in line with the services nappy changing policy. There was, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. Staff were seen to attend to children's personal hygiene during the day. The service was clean. The nappy changing policy was on display in the nappy changing unit.

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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children at all times in the service on the day of inspection.

(2)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box for children stored in a conspicuous position that was easily accessible for the staff to access if required.

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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in the service in February 2024.

(b) There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in March 2024, and the smoke alarm in February 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(a)

The registered provider informed the inspector that the service was of sound and stable structure.

(b)

The service appeared to be safe and secure.

(e)

The service was equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities. There were four toilets and four wash hand basins for children, one staff toilet and one nappy changing unit.

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

The temperature in the toddler room was taken at several intervals on the day of inspection. At 12.50 pm the temperature was recorded at 15.5°C. At 2.30 pm the temperature was recorded at 16.4°C. The temperature in care rooms in a preschool service are required to be maintained between 18°C and 22°C for the comfort of the children attending the service.

(d)

There was no warm water flowing from the hot tap in the senior ecce room. Children are required to have access to warm thermostatically controlled water at all times to support effective hand washing in a preschool service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c)

A wall heater has been installed on the wall of the toddler room. A wall thermometer has also been installed in the room. The registered provider will ensure the temperature will be checked daily to ensure the temperature is maintained between 18°C and 22°C for the comfort of the children attending the service.

(d)

Maintenance work was carried out on the taps in the senior ecce room on the day following the inspection. The registered provider and the staff will check thermostatically controlled water is available at all times in the senior ecce room.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c)

Photographs of the heater and the wall thermometer now in place in the wobbler room was received by the inspector.

(d)

A photograph of the flowing taps in the senior ecce room was received by the inspector.

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Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.