

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX130
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Name of Service:	Explore and Discover Childcare
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Address of Service:	St. Mary's National School, Tagoat, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 CX61
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Dee
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection Day 1:	15/04/2026
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Date of Inspection Day 2:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children Day 1:	AM	20	PM	9
No of pre-school children Day 2:	AM	21	PM	NA

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. 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).

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Description of service

Explore and Discover Childcare is a privately operated early years service which offers full time care to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service is in a purpose-built premises on the grounds of the St. Marys National School, in the village of Tagoat and consists of two playrooms, a small sleep room, sanitary accommodation including a wheelchair/disability accessible toilet, a kitchen and an office. An outdoor area is available to the children attending the service and is fully enclosed.

Staffing

There were six staff employed by the service, including the registered provider works directly in the service. The staff working directly with the early years children attending held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at the minimum Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play,

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Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4) and
Regulation 28 Insurance.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice	15/04/2026	The were no staff within date FAR available to the children at all times.
Status	The registered provider submitted a response that addressed the risk.	

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 manager was the designated person in charge on the first day of inspection. The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service on the second day. There was a second named staff member available to deputise as needed.

The files for all staff working in the service were reviewed on the day, including the relief staff.

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(2)(a)(b)

There were eleven validated references for six of the employees kept in each staff member's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were not required as none of staff had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

There were certificates of qualification for the staff members working directly with the children available on file.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Staff files reviewed on the day showed that a second validated reference was not available in respect of one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action asubmitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliances:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The second reference is now on file.

Going forward we will ensure that all references are on file before the commencement of work.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated reference.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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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)(2)

During the inspection, there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

During the morning there were 4 staff caring for 20 children.

During the afternoon there were 3 staff caring for 13 children.

On the second day during the morning there was 4 staff caring for 21 children.

The registered provider was present on the second day and additional to the staff in the room.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

All of the children attending the service on the day of inspection had access to both indoor and outdoor spaces for play.

The service consists of two playrooms, a sleep room and adjacent toilets. In the entrance hall, children had labelled hooks for their personal belongings such as coats, boots and bags.

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Both playrooms were bright and warm with sufficient space for the number of children attending. The rooms were decorated to meet the needs of the age and stage of development of the children using them.

Children had access to the outdoor play areas located to the rear of the premises. The outside area was developed to reflect the coastal location of the service and had large sandy play areas. The area was well developed and resourced with a variety of toys, equipment and interest areas for the children to use. The areas included digging and planting sections, covered areas, climbing frames, tyres, and mud kitchen. All of the children enjoyed time outside on the day of inspection.

(b)

All children were facilitated to rest or sleep as needed. A small sleep room was available with two sleep beds. Both rooms had a quiet corner for children to sit and relax. The preschool room one had sofa that was used by the children daily. The area also had soft cushions and reading materials. The preschool room two had a corner set up with soft mats, cushions and reading material where children could rest and relax as and when they wanted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The playrooms were bright and warm with natural light and ventilation through openable windows. Both playrooms had low shelving with trays and boxes of toys, materials which were easily accessible to the children. The tables and chairs were suitable to the ages of the children using them.

The rooms included a home corner, jigsaws, puzzles, dolls house, blocks, small world, art and craft materials and reading books. The children were observed fully engaged in their play and learning and enjoyed finger painting, floor play, magnetics and peg boards, playdough during the inspector's visit. Staff set out trays and experiences that the children freely moved between. The interactions between the children and staff were kind and gentle, and the staff were familiar with the individual children's likes, dislikes and personalities. For example, a staff member was observed to sit and cuddle and child in her arms who was tired while awaiting collection for home. Throughout the rooms children's artwork was displayed along with current interests, photographs of their families, birthdays, height charts, check in placard and their daily routine. The atmosphere throughout the morning was calm and relaxed, with the transitions between activities effortless. Children in the preschool room held a "Monday Meeting" every week where they discussed and planned their activities for the coming week which was based around their interests.

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Non-Compliance Information

There was wear and tear observed in the rooms with some toys showing broken pieces and were in need of refreshing and replacing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliances:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Broken toys and pieces have been removed. Retouching of paint was carried out with further painting work planned for the summer closure.

Daily check lists will be carried out to include the indoor and outdoor areas. Any broken equipment will be replaced or discarded.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs from the rooms.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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 entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of children's reach and storage facilities were inaccessible to children. Emergency and fire exits were signposted and unobstructed and staff were aware of the evacuation procedures and location of the assembly point.

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Infection Control:

The playrooms and sanitary areas were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Perishable food was stored in the fridges.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a safe sleep policy and a record book for the administration of medicines.

Safe Sleep:

Children were facilitated to sleep as needed while attending the service. Staff showed the inspector how sleep checks were recorded and were familiar with safe sleep requirements such as how often to check sleeping children and maintaining adequate sleep room temperatures.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The sleep room was cluttered and used for storage of non-sleep related equipment and toys. A number of boxes were stored on top of the presses and posed as potential risk to children and staff if they fell off.

Infection Control:

2. The practices observed during nappy changing were not carried out consistently, in line with service's nappy changing procedure, posing a risk of contamination. The following was observed:
 - Gloves were not removed after the nappy change before redressing the child.
 - The lid of the nappy bin was opened by hand instead of the foot pedal
 - Children's hands were not washed after their nappy was changed.
 - Staff did not consistently wash their hands after every nappy change.
 - Antibacterial wipes used to clean the mat were stored in a lidded box, however the box was contaminated as staff had not removed their gloves or washed their hands after nappy changing before opening the box of wipes.
3. Supervision around toileting was inconsistent. For example, toilets were not flushed and not all children washed their hands after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

4. A review of administration of medication forms in two playrooms indicated that written parental consent was not obtained before the administration of medication for all children. This was not in line with the service's policy for the safe administration of medication.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliances:

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The sleep room has been decluttered including the boxes stored on top of presses. Additional storage shed will be sourced for storage.
2. A more comprehensive nappy changing procedure has been devised and implemented to ensure that all appropriate Infection Control measures are adhered to at all times. This procedure clearly indicates proper use of PPE, hand washing practices for children and staff, and nappy disposal practices and cleaning of nappy-changing area. Staff were informed of the revised nappy changing procedure and are currently implementing it. The service provider will regularly undertake a coaching and supervisory role to ensure all staff continue to implement all infection control measures.
3. A revision of the toileting policy has been completed to include adult supervision to ensure children are able to complete the process unsupervised. Staff are updated on the revised toileting policy to include adult supervision until each child is capable of and competent to complete the toileting process, unsupervised.
4. All staff have been informed of the correct process of securing parent's written permission prior to administering medication as per the Policy on Administering Medication in the Policies and Procedures Document. Parental consent is in place. The service provider will ensure that all staff are familiar with the Administering Medication Policy and correct procedure involved in administering medication to children at the service, including the securing of Parent's signature, giving permission prior to each medication being administered.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph from sleep room, copy of revised Nappy Changing Procedure, copy of revised Toileting Policy. Policy on Administering Medications. Copy of Record Card which includes giving parental permission to administer medications.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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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

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises which were available to the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Refer to statutory notice page 3.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation was addressed.

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)

Fire drills were completed monthly. The last fire drill completed was recorded on the 17 April 2026.

(b)

A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in February 2026.

(4)

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

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a valid certificate of insurance for a childcare service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

There was a lack of maintenance within some areas of the service. For example:

Areas in the playrooms and around the service required dusting and cleaning.

Open low shelves in one of the playrooms which were accessible to children were cluttered and mixed with items.

Areas in the playrooms required painting as paint was missing and areas were marked.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliances:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The room cleaning rota procedure was discussed with all staff to ensure all areas are properly cleaned on a daily basis. Shelves were decluttered of multiple resources, leaving one resource on each shelf.

All rooms are checked by the person in charge and signed off on when cleaning is properly completed to the required standard of cleanliness.

Resources are rotated regularly to maintain interest for children and opportunities to develop varied skills of numeracy, literacy, creativity, problem-solving and music.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of decluttered shelves and newly resourced shelves.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.