

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2017KE507
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Gatelodge Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Gatelodge B, Green Road, The Curragh, Co. Kildare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R56 PC82
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Josephine Ryan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection: Day 1</b>	24/11/2023
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<b>Date of Inspection: Day 2</b>	04/12/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	13
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	25	PM	15

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F. Maher
<b>Title:</b>	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

N/A

## Description of service

Gatelodge Childcare opened in 2017 as a privately run childcare service for pre-school children aged 1 to 6 years. The service provides full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children from 08:00am-18:00pm, Monday to Friday. School aged care is provided also. The service opens for 38 weeks of the year. The Early Years' Service is based in a refurbished detached two storey premises with two pre-school rooms provided, one on the first floor and the second on the ground floor of the building, an extension to the premises opened in 2021 with the addition of two further pre-school rooms. A sleep room and kitchen is also provided and outdoor play areas are located to the rear and side of the premises. Car parking is available at the front of the building.

## Staffing

There were five adults present, including the registered provider on both inspection days. Four staff members were working directly with the children on 24 November and 4 December; the registered provider was available to provide support and relief to the care rooms as necessary during each day. All adults employed and working directly with the pre-school children in the service had documentary evidence available of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care Education as per 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

The inspection was unannounced on both inspection days and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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.

## Additional Information

Day 2 of this inspection was triggered by information received by the Inspectorate on 1 December 2023.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on both 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, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

## Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required on both days of the inspection.

The records of seven staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Fourteen written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of seven records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for seven employed staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Five members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)(a)

There was documentary evidence that all staff had signed that they had received and understood the policies of the service.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

## Compliance Information

**4 December 2023**

The registered provider ensured that the required written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.

The content of the following policies was reviewed and found to be in keeping with the regulations. There was documentary evidence of regular review and updated versions of specific policies in relation to the safety and supervision of children in the service.

- Safety statement
- Statement of purpose and function
- Accident and incident policy
- Policy on authorisation to collect children
- Critical incident plan
- Missing child policy
- Supervision of children policy
- Recruitment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Risk management policy
- Staff training policy
- Staff support and supervision policy
- Complaints Policy

### 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

### 24 November 2023

- (1)  
There were 20 children attending the service being supervised directly 4 staff members during the inspection.
- (2)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.
- (8)(a)  
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

### 4 December 2023

- (1),(2)  
There were 25 children attending the service being supervised by 4 staff members during the inspection. The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.
- (8)(a)  
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

## 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:*
- (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;*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

## Compliance Information

**4 December 2023**

(1) (f)

A detailed care plan was in place for one child with a specific additional requirement.

(3)(c)

The records in writing were open to inspection on the premises.

(4)

Records were retained in storage for the required period as confirmed by the registered provider.

## 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:*

*(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

## Compliance Information

**4 December 2023**

(i) The staff roster was displayed and available for inspection.

(k) The registered provider ensured that records in writing were maintained regarding any incident that had occurred in the service to date, this was supported by the documentary evidence reviewed for a sample of accident and incident reports inspected.

## 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)

The Toddler and pre-school rooms were equipped with low level tables and chairs to enable children sit comfortably for meals/snack and tabletop activities, the low level chairs in the Wobbler room were each equipped with a harness to ensure the safety of the younger children when seated for meals and tabletop activities. Equipment and learning materials were displayed on accessible low-level shelving in the pre-school rooms. The children attending Pre-school rooms 1 and 2 spent the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) session primarily in the large covered, spacious well-resourced outdoor classroom with direct access to the spacious play area equipped with mud kitchen and wooden climbing frame. The Toddler and Wobbler rooms also had direct access to their own dedicated play areas which had sand and water play and various ride on equipment.

(b)  
A separate sleep room was available for the younger children with two standard cots available. Low level beds were available for any child aged 2 and above who wished to avail of a period of sleep when attending the part time or full day service.

Comfortable rest areas were available in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax during the day as required.

### 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:

On both days of the inspection, the main entrance door to the service was secured with a magnetic release mechanism which was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. An intercom system was in place to alert staff to any person(s) at the main entrance.

All toys and equipment observed were in good condition and working order.

Staff completed daily indoor and outdoor environmental risk assessments to ensure the environment was safe prior to the children arriving to the service. A maintenance log was available to staff in the entrance lobby for any repairs/maintenance concerns to be logged.

##### Infection Control:

The premises were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and cleaning schedules were completed daily. Children's hands were washed before eating, following toilet use, nappy changing, outdoor and messy play. There was a supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towel, dispensed from wall mounted units, to support hygienic hand washing and drying. Nappy changing facilities were available and staff members carried out nappy changing in line with the nappy change policy of the service. Foot pedal operated bins were available for the safe disposal of waste, used paper hand towel nappies and tissues.

##### Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and staff members were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

##### Safe Sleep:

Staff advised the inspector that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care was documented.

##### Fire Safety:

Staff members advised the inspectors they were familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures and confirmed regular monthly fire drills are carried out. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.

##### Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service; this was confirmed by staff and the registered provider.

### 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.*

*(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*

*(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 registered ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the electronic attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms on both days of the inspection.

(2)  
Not applicable as this was not a drop in service.

(3) (a),(b)  
The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed 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.

### 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)

Persons with first aid responder (FAR) training were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)

The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms and were immediately available for the children at all times.

### 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 was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 15 November 2023.

(b)

A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced 12 September 2023 and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 29 February 2023.

(4)

Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

### 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

##### 24 November 2023

Children were observed being supervised in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play areas at all times by the staff members caring for them.

##### 4 December 2023

The supervision of the children, arriving to the service for the sessional service at 09:00am, was observed being well managed at this time as follows;

One staff member accepted each child at the main entrance into the lobby of the service and a second staff member was positioned at the internal door to ensure the children were safely escorted into to the pre-school area where a third staff member was available to supervise the children.

At departure time, the children going home were gathered in the entrance lobby with one staff member in attendance to ensure one child at a time exited the service into the care of their parent/guardian. The remaining children were supervised by one staff member in the pre-school room with the door securely closed.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### 4 December 2023

At 09:11am, it was observed that two children, aged 1-2 years were left unsupervised in the Wobbler room when the staff member left the room to accept a child from their parent at the main door.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The Policy on Supervision of Children was circulated and discussed with all staff.

A greater emphasis will be placed on this policy during staff training.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Document

### Summary Comment

Following review of the submitted document and written assurance given by the registered provider, that this policy has been discussed with all staff, the requirement for Regulation 27 has been met and will be reviewed at the time of the next inspection.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

*(b) safe and secure,*

### Compliance Information

**4 December 2023**

(b)

The main entrance door to the service was electronically secured and controlled by staff to prevent the pre-school children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. A staff member was observed to facilitate entry and exit to the service throughout the inspection and at collection time ensuring the internal doors to the pre-school rooms remained closed and secure.

The play areas to the rear are enclosed by high level wooden fencing and one high level wooden gate to one side which has a magnetic keypad release mechanism placed on the inside of the gate and is for staff use only. A secondary security feature in the garden consists of low level wooden fencing between two play areas adjacent to the pre-school room this preventing children leaving the main play area unnoticed.

The internal doors to the pre-school room and the toddler and wobbler areas were controlled with a magnetic release mechanism which was positioned at a height and out of reach of the children.

## 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 valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 40 children.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
It was observed on inspection that material changes had been made to the Wobbler and Toddler room since the previous inspection, however, the registered provider ensured there was adequate clear floor space for the numbers of children attending the rooms for play and movement, see Table 1 below,

Room	Toddler room/ previously Baby room	Wobbler room/ previously Toddler room
Clear Floor Space	27 m <sup>2</sup>	16.92 m <sup>2</sup>

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

*(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

**4 December 2023**

(e)  
The registered provider notified the Agency on 1 December 2023 in writing with details of an incident which had occurred on 29 November 2023.