

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2017LH500

**Name of Service:** Ready, Steady, Grow: Stonetown

**Address of Service:** Stonetown National School, Luabhdh, Dundalk, Co. Louth

**Eircode:** A91 X923

**Name of Registered Provider:** Jenny Kerley

**Service type:** Part Time

**Date(s) of Inspection:** 14/11/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<b>AM</b>	4	<b>PM</b>	1

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Flood and L Jameson
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

Ready Steady Grow Stonetown is a privately owned service that has been in operation since August 2017. The service is registered as part time with a capacity for 18 preschool children aged 3-6 years.

The service operates from within a purposively developed classroom at Stonetown National School which is located in a rural setting in Co. Louth. Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary facilities and a storage area.

The service has access to an enclosed outdoor play area on the grounds of the primary school. Parking is available for the drop off and collection of the pre-school children.

### Staffing

There are 5 staff members employed in the service to work directly with the pre-school children including the registered provider and relief staff.

### 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 areas of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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 inspectors wish 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) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b) The deputy person in charge was present during the inspection.

The staff files of five members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a)&(b) Ten written and validated references from past employers or a source other than a past employer were available on the day of inspection.

(c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the five staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer, after the age of eighteen.

(4) Four out of five staff who worked directly with the preschool children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentation was not available to demonstrate that one staff member who was observed working directly with children on the day of the inspection held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(4) Staff member has been removed from the morning preschool staff rota.

Staff member will not be permitted to re-commence without the minimum level 5 childcare qualification on file.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

## 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

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10:30 and remained so throughout the duration of the inspection. Two staff members were present and working directly with the four preschool children present. The registered provider arrived at the service at approximately 11:15 and was present for the remainder of the inspection.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., the children's and staff attendance records, this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

### 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:*

*(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

(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

(1)  
(g) The behaviour management policy was available for inspection and staff were familiar with the policy.  
(h) Documentary evidence of the children's arrival and departure times was available for inspection.  
(k) It was observed that, an accident and incident record form was completed for a minor accident that occurred with a child during outdoor play. The required information was completed, and the parents were informed about the accident.  
An additional four accident and incident forms for the service were also reviewed and these were found to be complete with the required information and in accordance with the services policy on Accidents and Incidents.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1)  
(i) There was no staff roster available. In addition, the arrival and departure record had been pre-populated for staff at 13:30 and 14:00 when the inspectors reviewed the records at 11:00hrs.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)  
(i) A rota is now in located on the wall in the service.  
Rota will be distributed every Friday for display on the wall and for files.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of staff rota

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 16 has been addressed.

## 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

(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 were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Lunches provided by the parents were stored in the fridge, water was readily available to the children. The staff members joined the children at the tables, engaging in conversation and watching an educational programme on the television.
- All children were observed to access outdoor play for a period of time on the day of the inspection.
- No children required sleep on the day of inspection. A cosy corner with soft cushions and couches was available to the children to allow for adequate rest breaks if needed.
- The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff. Children who required changing were changed as required.

#### Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to communicate effectively with each other and the children on the day of the inspection.
- Staff demonstrated familiarity and good relationships with the children by talking about the children's personality, likes and dislikes with the inspectors.
- The service uses a social media communication app to send updates and photographs to parents, verbal handovers between staff and parents at collection time was observed.

- The registered provider provided evidence of a newsletter that is sent to parents at the end of term and stated that parent/teacher meeting are held twice a year, more frequently if required, for each child who attends the service.
- The service requires parents to complete the Voice of the Child forms for their child, which are held in the children's files.

### Physical and material environment:

- There was age-appropriate furniture in the care room such as correct sized tables and chairs. The play materials which were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children were stored or displayed on low level shelving units.
- Areas of interest included home area, construction toys, arts and crafts materials and a range of reading resources.
- A range of visual aids were displayed throughout the classroom. The staff stated that these were in place to support children who required additional supports in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

The following observations did not ensure that the children's well-being and development were being supported in the service:

#### Basic Needs:

1. There was no documentation available in the care room detailing important information on the care, supervision and strategies required for children who had additional care needs attending the service. This information should be readily available in order to provide and plan for children's safe care and development.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Actions

#### Basic Needs:

1. Children who require additional supports in the service now have their goals printed and placed on file. Evidence of supports used to reach these goals inclusive of supporting documentary evidence of meetings/correspondence with parents/primary care teams have also been filed.

Communication books and files will be set up in September with progress and goals updated frequently. Room leaders will be supported in maintaining these files.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of communication book and support plan

### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

## 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**

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

#### **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.
- The outdoor area was enclosed by walls and gates which were secured.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.

#### **Infection Control:**

- There was a supply of warm water, liquid hand-soap and single use paper towels in the service to support hand washing practices.
- Staff used the bin outside the building to dispose of soiled nappies which reduced the risk of cross-infection.

- All perishable snacks were appropriately stored in the refrigerator in the playroom.

### Administration of Medication:

- No child was observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The emergency fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

### Infection Control:

1. Inadequate handwashing practices were observed during the inspection as evidenced by the following:
  - A staff member did not wash their hands after changing a child following a toileting accident. In addition, this staff member did not wear gloves and was observed to return the child to the classroom which resulted in multiple opportunities to touch and contaminate surfaces. This staff member was also observed then to put the children's food place mats on the table and on which the children's snack was served directly. This is a cross-contamination risk.
  - Handwashing was not observed after the children returned from outdoor play.
2. No disposable aprons were available in accordance with the services nappy changing and toileting policy and as per best practice guidelines.

### General Safety:

The following posed a potential risk of injury to the children:

3. An elevated ramp in the outdoor area does not have secure boundary, posing a potential fall risk for children who were observed playing on ride on equipment on the ramp.
4. There was no safety/impact surface present in the outdoor play area accessed by the pre-school children and which contained 2 pieces of climbing equipment e.g. a slide and an activity centre.
5. The playhouse in the outdoor area was observed to have serrated edges which could cause injury to a child.

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

### Corrective & Preventive Actions:

#### Infection Control

- 1.

- All staff have completed training on correct hand washing and infection control. Signs have been placed over the sinks to serve as a reminder.
- Handwashing on returning from outdoors has also been written into the routine as a reminder when training staff on the importance and effectiveness in infection control.  
Part of staff induction/supervision and staff meetings will include infection control protocol and best practice.

2. Disposable aprons are now available in the service.

The use of disposable aprons will be monitored and ordered as required.

### **General Safety:**

3. The children will not be permitted to use the elevated ramp only the flat ground for the use of ride on cars.

The registered provider will look into erecting a railing upon discussion with the school Board of Management.

4. The small outdoor play climbing frame was immediately removed.

All safety instructions will be read prior to the equipment being used.

5. The broken window from the play house was removed.

All outdoor equipment will be inspected thoroughly as per risk assessments which are carried out daily.

All staff will be trained in effective risk management procedures.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of the daily routine that includes handwashing procedures.

### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

## **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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for 3 staff members.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises and were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

### Non-Compliance Information

(c) The sanitary facilities in the service were cold and the temperature was recorded at 15.6 °C at 11:24. This is outside the required temperature range of 18-22 °C to ensure the children's safety and comfort.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) A meeting was conducted with the principal and registered provider regarding sanitary room temperature guidelines. The principal has ensured the registered provider that the timer will be adjusted and the heating kept on longer to ensure room meets required temperature standard.

The room temperature in the bathroom will be monitored closely to ensure it maintains between 18 – 22 degrees and should it drop the principal will be contacted to rectify this issue immediately.

### Summary Comment

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 29 has been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.