

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017MO500
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Name of Service:	Footsteps Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Glencorrib National School, Glencorrib, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	H91 NAV2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edel Hyland
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Footsteps Pre-School is privately owned and operated and is registered to provide sessional services from 9 am to 12 midday to children aged from 2-6 years of age. The service is located in a section of a primary school in Glencorrib, a small village in South Co. Mayo. There is a playroom and sanitary facilities provided in the building. Children have access to outdoor areas with play equipment on the premises.

Staffing

There were five staff members including the registered provider who provides relief cover and an additional relief staff member working in the service at the time of the inspection. One staff member was employed through the Access and Inclusion Model.

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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28. 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 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

- (2) It was confirmed with the designated person in charge following review of documentation that there were three new staff working in the service since the most recent inspection of the 2 June 2021. The vetting documentation for two other staff had been reviewed on previous inspection.
- The following vetting information was available for the three staff new to the service:
- (a) Two written references from past employers in particular the most recent employer for the three staff members.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The vetting documentation on file showed that international police vetting was not required for the three staff members new to the service since the last inspection.
- (4) Evidence of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above was available for three staff new to the service since the most recent inspection.

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) On the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service there were 2 staff members working directly with the 16 children present. The registered provider arrived at the service shortly after the inspector's arrival and provided direct care to children during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of the children present attending sessional services was adhered to with 2 to 3 adults working with 16 children during the session.

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:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (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;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

A sample of 10 children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available for inspection to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

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 door to the building was secured on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service. There was a buzzer system in place to gain access to the premises. The inspector was admitted to the service following production of identification documentation to staff. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them during the inspection. Cleaning products were kept in a secured cupboard and were inaccessible by the children. Blind cords on windows in the playroom were secured with safety mechanisms. The kettle was stored out of reach of the children in the playroom.

Infection Control:

The staff prompted and supervised the children washing their hands using warm water, liquid soap and drying them with paper towels at appropriate times during the inspection. Foot pedal operated bins were available in the playroom and sanitary areas for the disposal of waste. Boxes of tissues were accessible by the children at low levels should they need to use them to clean their noses. The service was observed to be clean with cleaning records kept by staff.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspector that none of the children enrolled at the time of the inspection required medication to be administered to them whilst in attendance in the service.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were found to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

The designated person in charge informed the inspector that the service undertakes outings and that risk assessments are carried out by staff prior to undertaking outings. The service had insurance cover in place for outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The outdoor areas at the rear of the premises, that the staff advised the inspector were used by the children, led to the front of the school and had two open gates leading out to a busy road. The staff

advised the inspector that before children used the outdoor areas, the staff undertake a risk assessment of the area to ensure that the gates are secured. However, there was no written risk assessment on file or written records to record that the gates are checked by the staff for security prior to use. It is acknowledged that the children did not play outside during the inspection due to icy conditions outside.

2. There were two rodent bait boxes accessible to children in the tarmacadam section of the outdoor area.

Infection Control:

3. There were two waste bins stored in the tarmacadam section of the outdoor area and were potentially accessible by children when using this space.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A risk assessment was undertaken, and a checklist created.
The log/checklist is completed by staff daily before going outdoors.
2. The school principal was informed of TUSLA requirements. The school principal in turn contacted the pest control services to request the rodent boxes be removed.

Infection Control:

3. Permission was requested from the school principal to relocate their bins.
The bins were moved to a shed which is locked at all times and inaccessible to the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the risk assessment, receipt for pest control company services and photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and the regulatory requirements found to have been met.

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 children were checked in and out of the service by staff with written records kept in an attendance book.
- (3) (a) The staff approved the entry of the inspector to the premises following production and examination of the inspector's identification documentation.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) (b) and (4)

There was no written record system available for the recording of visitors to the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(3) (b) and (4)

The registered provider advised in a written response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A visitors log was created. The visitors log is available on entering the service and will be completed for each visitor.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the visitor log was submitted.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met through the actions and evidence submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate 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) A First Aid Response (FAR) training certificate with an expiry date of the 23 April 2025 was available for one staff working in the service during the inspection.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored on a high shelf in the playroom.
(b) The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment 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 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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff.
- (b) Certificates of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment dated for the 21 April 2023 and the smoke alarms/fire detection system dated the 18 April 2023 were displayed in the service.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available and displayed in the hallway for up to 22 children attending sessional services at any one time valid until the 27 March 2024.