

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018GY513		
Name of Service:	Footsteps Preschool Headford		
Address of Service:	Headford Girl's National School, Church Road, Headford, Co. Galway		
Eircode:	H91 FD71		
Name of Registered Provider:	Edel Hyland		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	13/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	64	PM 49
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway		
Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly, E Friel.		
Title:	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

The service is located in Headford National school, in Headford, Co Galway and caters for children aged between one year and six years of age. The service provides a sessional, part time and full day care service from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday. The service consists of four playrooms and both adult and children's sanitary areas. The service also has access to an outdoor play area at the rear of the building and the school's indoor school gym. There is a school aged childcare service also registered on the premises.

Staffing

There were 20 staff members employed in the service and 3 students on placement. The registered provider was working on the premises on the day of inspection and facilitated the inspection

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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of a child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 22, 25 and 26 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which was identified under Regulation 9. 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, 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

(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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge, deputy and named persons available on the premises. Both the designated person in charge and the deputy were on the premises when the inspectors arrived.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that both the designated person in charge and the deputy were on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.
- (2) Recruitment files were assessed in relation to 6 adults who had commenced employment since the last inspection on 10 June 2024 and 3 students currently on placement.
- The following files were available:
- (a) Eleven of the eighteen required validated references were from previous employers.
- (b) The seven remaining validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults for whom they were required, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) The new five adults employed to work directly with the children all held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework. The three students on placement and the sixth adult working in school age care did not require any childcare qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a continuous period of over six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member made contact with the embassy of country in which they lived for a period of time, as it was 30 years ago, up to date documentation was not available.

In future, we will discuss with staff all details of their C.V prior to they commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the e mail that was sent to the Embassy requesting police vetting was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed and will be reviewed at the next 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.*
- (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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (2) At 10:10 am on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation:-
- Footsteps Room, there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement working with 18 children, aged over 3 years.
- Next steps room, there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement working with 17 children aged over 3 years.
- Footprints room, there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement working with 12 children.
- First Steps room 2, there were 4 adults working with 17 children aged over 2 years.
- At 15:30 am on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation:-

Footprints and Footsteps (combined) there were 3 adults working with 15 children.

Next steps room, there were 3 adults and 1 student working with 17 children.

First Steps room, there were 4 adults working with 17 children.

(8) (a) The staff roster of the service indicated that there were two adults on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service.

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,

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the service collaborates with parents who supply their children with healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. Children ate their lunches and snacks in their playrooms.
- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks and meals. The staff members encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- Older children could access the toilets on their own or they asked the staff member for assistance.
- The children had access to low level hand washing sinks in all of the sanitary areas. The children could wash their hands without adult assistance. Soap, paper towels and tissues were also available.
- Soft seating was available in all the playrooms. Children were observed using these areas after snack time while they were waiting for the rest of the children to finish lunch and on various occasions during the inspection. All of these areas were inviting and had activities suitable for the children to rest and relax.
- All of the children in the service got an opportunity to use the outdoor play area on several occasions throughout the day of inspection. The younger children including the got an opportunity to use the play area which was accessed directly from their playrooms. The children spent a large proportion of the session in the outdoor areas.

- The younger children had special outdoor wet gear and wellington boots to protect the children in cold in inclement weather.
- Adults sat at the tables or on the floor with the children when helping with jigsaws and various other play activities. The level of interaction and engagement of the children was positive. Staff were also observed sitting with the children, while they ate their snacks and meals, chatting and creating a positive social atmosphere.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used by the children were suitable for the age profile of the children. The older children ate their snacks and meals from stoneware crockery. The children had access to their own drinks at meals and throughout the day.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes were available to the children on the day of inspection. The parents supplied all the children's snacks and meals.
- The children were observed to have healthy and appetising food for their snacks- fruit, rolls, yogurts and sandwiches in all the playrooms for morning snack time at 10:00am.
- On the day of inspection, there was a varied and large selection of main meals offered to the children e.g. pasta bolognaise and cheese, chicken, broccoli and potatoes, mixed vegetables with chicken, chicken curry with sweetcorn, cheese omelette with rice, chicken with potatoes with sweetcorn, vegetable soup with ham sandwiches, tuna with beans and potatoes.
- The service had a selection of food available such as brown bread, chicken, cheese and a large selection of fruit should a child require extra food throughout the session.
- Each playroom had a refrigerator to store the perishable foodstuff supplied by the children for their snacks and meals.

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) Certificates were on file to evidence that three staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR); two of whom were available while the early years children were present in the service.
- (2)(a) (b) The well stocked first aid boxes/bags were stored within easy reach of the adults in the care rooms and were available 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as 11 February 2025.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated 28 March 2024, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 17 October 2024.
- (2)(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Each child attending the service was checked in and out each day by a relevant staff member and a record of same was recorded and easily accessible to each staff member. On the day of inspection an attendance record/book was present in each playroom.

(3)(a)(b) A register was maintained for persons other than those listed above that entered the premises it was available for inspection by authorised persons.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider provided evidence in the form of a certificate of insurance that the service was adequately insured. The current insurance certificate stated that the service was insured for 95 preschool children and was valid until the 27/03/2025.