

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:	10/06/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	32

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway</p>
Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly and S Meehan
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 Boy's National school, in Headford Co Galway and caters for children aged between 12 months and 6 years of age. The service provides a sessional, part time and full day care service from 7.30 am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service consists of 4 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. The registered provider was on the premises on the day of 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19, and 23 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 22 and 23. 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 service manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the manager and the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

It was confirmed that there were 20 members of staff employed in the Early Years' service.

(2)(a) There were 22 written and appropriately validated references available from the adult's most recent employer.

- (b) There were 18 written and appropriately validated references available from a source other than recent employer for the staff working in the service, which included 2 students.
 - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.
 - (d) Police Vetting disclosure was available for 2 adults working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.
- (4) There were 20 adults working directly with children who had obtained at least an 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) There were 2 adults working in the service that did not have Police vetting disclosures available for when they lived outside the jurisdiction of a period of over 6 months.

One adult had lived in 3 different countries, so therefore required police vetting disclosure for all 3 jurisdictions and the 2nd adult had only lived in 1 other jurisdiction.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The required police vetting is now in place and all staff will have required vetting prior to starting employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the outstanding police vetting were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted were reviewed. The non compliances identified under Regulation (9)(2)(d) have been adequately 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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

(2) At 10:30 am on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation:-
Footsteps Room, (Footprints in the Pm) there were 4 adults and working with 17 children, aged over 3 years.

Next steps room , there were 2 adults working with 15 children aged over 3 years.

First Steps room 2, there were 4 adults working with 13 children aged over 12 months.

At 15:30 am on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation:-

Footprints there were 2 adults working with 9 children.

Next steps room , there were 3 adults working with 10 children.

First Steps room, there were 4 adults working with 13 children.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a) The staff roster of the service indicated that there was only 1 adult rostered to be on the premises from 7.30 to 8 am each day. There were 3 staff rostered to start work at 8:00am each day . A registered provider of a full day service must ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff roster was amended to ensure that 2 staff members are in the premises at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 29th of July 2024 , a copy of the revised staff roster was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non compliant as outlined above. The regulatory requirement has been achieved.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children had access to drinks table in each playroom which allowed them to access drinks independently.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in the playroom fridges and were clearly labelled with each child's name.
- The older children were supported and encouraged to be independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development, including self-feeding, little helper, toileting and tidying away after their work and play activities.
- Nappy changing took place in a timely manner throughout the day.
- Children had access to a quiet area in the playrooms to rest / relax. There was a dedicated sleep room with 4 standard cots for children under 2 years of age to sleep. Stackable beds were available for children over 2 years of age in the First steps playroom.
- The children were appropriately dressed for outdoor play. The children were observed to enjoy freedom of movement in the outdoor play area.
- Adults were observed to be caring and supportive to children and their individual needs.
- Information was provided to parents and guardians at drop off and collection times, handover book for the younger children and via a multi-media app or by phone.
- The children were observed at imaginative play, sensory play, action songs, drawing, running, dancing to music, preparing for 'Father's Day' and at tabletop activities.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

- The physical and material environment featured a range of developmentally appropriate toys, equipment and play materials suitable for the age range and number of children in attendance which supported children's learning and development overall.
- The playroom had defined areas of interest, play equipment and materials. There were dolls and push toys and transport toys. There was a library with various books in each playroom. There were clearly defined home corners, which included child size kitchens with crockery and utensils. There were construction areas with trucks, cars and machines, trains and tracks. There was open shelving with farm animals, musical instruments, sensory materials, art and craft materials, puzzles, games, dinosaurs, jigsaws, shapes sorters, pins, geometrical toys and counters.
- Rest area was available in the playroom for the children to rest or relax as they wished.
- The outdoor area had a grass, impact absorbent and tarmac surface. Play equipment and materials provided in the outdoor area supported a range of physically energetic activities and play experiences.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

1. In the Footsteps room, while children sat for their dinner together, they did not all eat at the same time. Children had to wait for their dinner to be heated in a microwave and it was observed that dinner began at 1pm and some children were still waiting for their food to be heated at 1.30pm.
2. Crockery and plates were not provided in the next steps playroom at the morning snack time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Staff begin the reheating process while children are preparing for lunch, (handwashing etc) which ensures the reheating procedures are adhered to in a more-timely manner and the children get to eat their lunch together.
2. Crockery and plates are available to the children for all snack and meal times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of 2 microwave ovens, revised healthy eating policy and a letter to parent was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate .

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non compliant as outlined above. The regulatory requirement has been achieved and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The main hot meal of the day was supplied by the parents / guardians. The food given to the children attending the Footsteps playroom was at variance with the healthy eating policy that was available in the service. Seven of fourteen meals given to the children in the Footsteps rooms as their main meal of the day consisted of 3 plates of plain pasta, 2 plates of pasta with chopped up hot dogs and 2 plates of 2 plain chicken nuggets, which was in variance which was requested by the service from the parents in a letter that was issued to the parents on the 30/11/2023, which stated “going forward for the preschool we need your child to have a varied nutritional lunch which includes a serving of protein, carbohydrates, fruit or vegetables ,fibre and dairy .” The service did not offer a substitute for these meals. The registered provider did not ensure that adequate, suitable and nutritious and varies food was available to each child attending the service.

This was also highlighted in the pervious inspection dated the 10/11/2024, and the registered provider stated in their response “In the event where a child does not have a meal, a healthy alternative will be provided by the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply

Corrective and Preventive Action

A daily checklist will be introduced on reopening on the 26/08/2024 which will ensure that children have the required food provided. If the correct food requirements are not met and if parents cannot drop the appropriate meal, we have arranged with our local supplier that they will provide the required healthy and nutritional food each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

A letter to the parents , outlining a revised Healthy Eating Policy.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non compliant as outlined above. The regulatory requirement has been achieved and will be reviewed 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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety

1. Children attending the First steps playroom were not offered appropriate seating for eating and drinking. Children over the age of 12 months were observed sitting in highchairs, when they appeared to be developmentally ready to sit on chairs with backs and able to rest their feet on the floor.

Infection Control:

2. It was observed that the adults in the First steps playroom did not have separate sanitary accommodation. Both staff and children used the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the first steps playroom . Nappy changing also took place in this space as there was a nappy changing unit also located here. This posed the risk of cross infection.
There was only one nappy changing unit in place at the previous inspection dated the 10/11/2024.
3. The nappy changing practice observed on the day of inspection was invariance with the service policy. Of the 3 nappy changing procedures observed ,1 of the 3 adults did not wash a child's hands prior to and after nappy changing.
4. A self-sealing , leak proof, foot pedalled bin was not available in 1 of the nappy changing areas thus posing a risk of cross infection.
5. It was observed at nappy changing that used nappies were place in nappy bags. These bags were not disposed of immediately but were left on top of the self-sealing bin which may present as a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following their reply:

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. A new appropriate table and chairs have replaced the highchairs in the Firststeps room for children who are developmentally ready to sit on chairs with backs and able to rest their feet on the floor.

Infection Control:

2. Staff in the Firststeps room will now use separate sanitary accommodation to the children. Staff toilets are located in the main school building.
3. All staff have been retrained on our policy and procedures regarding nappy changing and infection control.
4. A self- sealing and leak proof nappy bin is now available in both nappy changing areas.
5. Staff have been retrained on the correct nappy changing and cross infection procedures to ensure that nappies are disposed of immediately and safely in the self-sealing bin provided

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the new nappy disposal bins and the revised nappy changing policy was submitted to the early Years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliant as outlined above. The regulatory requirement has been achieved and will be reviewed at the next inspection.