

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DL003		
Name of Service:	Shining Stars		
Address of Service:	16 Pinehill Industrial Estate, Mountain Top, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F92 XA89		
Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife Dorrian		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	03/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan		
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		

Description of service

Shining Stars is an early years' service located in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Letterkenny in Co. Donegal. The building is a former commercial unit that has been adapted for use as an early years' service. Accommodation comprises of a large indoor playroom and sanitary accommodation. A small, partially covered outdoor area is available directly off the playroom.

The sessional service caters for children aged 2-6 years and operates weekdays from 9:00 – 12:00 catering for a maximum of twenty-two children at any one time. There is a morning and afternoon school age service operated from the same premises.

Staffing

There are four staff employed in the service, all of whom hold a relevant qualification in early childhood care and education. The registered provider does not work directly in the service but provides oversight and support for the service.

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 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, 23, 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, 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*
- (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.

(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) The staff files of five adults were reviewed, including the registered provider.

(a) Five references were available from past employers and were validated by the registered provider.

(b) Three references were available from a past employer and were validated by the registered provider.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. 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 adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years and therefore did not require police vetting.

(4) Four of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

1 (a)(b)(c) The designated person in charge was not on the premises on the day of the inspection and confirmed to the inspector that they are not on the premises on a daily basis. No one had been appointed to deputise in their absence.

2(a)(b) Two of the references required were not on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The PIC has been changed since the inspection- CIC was submitted and it has been approved that a new Person in Charge has been appointed.

2. One staff has obtained her second reference. We are waiting for the other staff to submit her reference as she is currently on leave. We will ensure all reference are in place before staff start in service

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. One reference submitted.

Summary Comment

1. The provider has met the regulatory requirement for Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)
2. The second reference remains outstanding and will be checked on 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.

(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 day of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working with the children.
- (3) On the morning of the inspection 3 adults cared for 12 children between the ages of 3-5 years.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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 Need

- Snack was provided by the service with the exception of children who wished to bring snack from home. Snack on the day of the inspection was crackers, cheese, ham and fruit.
- The indoor playroom was spacious, with enough room for the children to move around freely and play individually or together in small and large groups.
- Individual care plans, where required, were in place to support children's learning and development in the service.

Supporting relationships

- Staff interactions with the children were warm and kind, with staff praising children's achievements and positive behaviours.
- The service had a key worker system in place with each child assigned a member of staff to support the child in the service and to facilitate communication between the service and the child's parents or guardians.
- Communication with parents and guardians took place at drop off and pick up times.
- Transitions to other preschool's and primary school were supported in the service. Staff demonstrated a "Where we are off to next" map, with pictures of the local primary schools and the pictures of the children planning to attend the schools beside it. In addition, the board contained a picture of another room in a service owned by the registered provider, where a number of the children were transitioning to in September, with some pictures of equipment the children can expect to play with in the service.

Physical environment:

- The environment was laid out with a number of defined interest areas such as a den space with cushions, a rest area with small sofa's, a home corner with a kitchen and dining room, a construction area, small world figurines and toys, fine motor activities and an art area.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available for table top activities.
- Low level shelving displaying the materials were within easy access of all children.
- The outdoor area was partially covered to provide shelter. Sand trays with spades and buckets were available to the children in addition to a variety of sports equipment such as footballs, basketballs and tennis rackets. A construction area and tyres were provided for open ended play. On the day of the inspection, children who wished to play outside were facilitated and children who did not wish to play outside remained in the indoor room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b)

1. Drinking water was not available to the children outside of the designated snack time, some children did not partake in snack time therefore did not have a drink for the duration of the session.
2. The privacy and dignity of each child was not respected during nappy changing. The privacy screen in place was not sufficient to ensure privacy and dignity of the preschool child as this space is shared with the preschool children's sanitary accommodation. This has been a previous noncompliance on the previous two inspections in 2020 and 2021.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Children water bottles were put out on the trolley at main door in the morning and put away just before home time. We will ensure that this process is carried out during the day.
2. We will ensure that this privacy screen is high enough and far enough out to ensure other children cannot see children getting changed. This will be carried out over the summer months- to have it completed for the new term in September.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

Provision for the privacy and dignity of children during nappy changing time remains outstanding and will be checked on 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

General Safety:

- The main door to the service was secure on the inspector's arrival and remained secure throughout the inspection.
- All external doors in the service were secured to restrict unauthorised access.
- The equipment and materials in the service were in a good state of repair and were well maintained.
- Cleaning materials were stored on high shelves out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor play area was surrounded by a brightly coloured high wooden fence with an exit gate containing a slide bolt placed at adult height on the inside.

Infection Control:

- Pedal operated bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.
- Ventilation was provided for via two openable windows in the playroom.
- Children who brought food from home placed their perishable items in the refrigerator.
- Staff reminded children to wash their hands after using the toilet and when returning from outdoor play.
- Cleaning charts were up to date and the service was clean on the day of the inspection.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day of the inspection, no medicine was administered to any child. Medication consent records for each child attending were kept on file in the service. Staff were familiar with the policy on administration of medication and the procedures to be followed for the safe administration of medicine.

Outings:

- Staff confirmed that the children were going on an end of year outing in the local community in June and staff demonstrated awareness of the services policy on outings and the procedures to be followed to ensure the safety of children while on an outing.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- In the children's sanitary accommodation, there was no soap available for effective handwashing.
- Children's hands were not washed after nappy changing posing a risk of cross infection to the preschool child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The soap dispenser has been refilled. The refilling of soap dispensers has been added to the morning checklist.
2. The nappy changing policy has been given to staff with handwashing highlighted. All staff will be trained in this policy at the beginning of a new term.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The requirements of this regulation have been met.

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)
The service roster provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had current training in first aid.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes with content items were within date, safely stored and easily accessible in a conspicuous position.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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) A written record was available detailing fire drills had taken place in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly which was evidenced through fire drill records with the most recent fire drill taking place on 8 April 2025.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 10 October 2024 and the smoke alarms had been serviced on 21 April 2025.

(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire evacuation were displayed on the wall at beside the fire exit in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that adequate insurance was in place for 22 children up until 27 March 2026.