

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2020GY005
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sonas Early Years Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 11, Galway Retail Centre, Knocknacarra, Co. Galway
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 H6CY
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Theresa Murphy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	24/05/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	71	PM	67
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Meehan and F Mc Donagh.
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.
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### Description of service

This purpose-built privately owned premises was opened in 2020, in a retail development in an urban area of Galway city, in Knocknacarra known as Galway retail centre. The service operating hours are 08.00 am to 06.00 pm, from Monday to Friday and the age range of children is 0 - 6 years of age. The service caters for full day-care, part-time care, Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) and sessional pre-school care programmes from 09.30 am to 12.30 pm.

This ground floor premises has a total of 5 playrooms, the Buttercups room, Bluebells room, Daisy's room, Daffodils room and the Sunflower room. There is a designated sleep room with a total of 15 cots for children under 2 years of age and 16 stackable beds for children over 2 years of age. The service has a designated kitchen where food is prepared, cooked, and stored on site by a resident chef. To the rear of the premise's children have access to an artificial surface outdoor area with various interest areas to the back of the premises for play.

### Staffing

There is a total of 20 adults working in the service and 15 adults are working directly with preschool children in the service. The service has a manager, deputy manager and a chef. The registered provider and the director is not on the premises daily.

### 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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 29. 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 person in charge, area manager, 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

There was a total of 20 staff files reviewed which included the registered provider and a director of the board.

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise.
  - (b) The registered provider had a manager in place who was the person in charge and was on the premises when the Early Year's Inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.
- (2)
- (a)(b) 38 of the 38 validated references on file, in respect of the 20 adults were from past employers or a source other than a previous employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 20 adults.
  - (d) Police vetting disclosures available for 11 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Copies of an Early Childhood Care and Education Qualifications at a minimum of a level 5 were available on file for 18 adults working directly with and caring for the children.
- Proof of Identification in the form of an identity card, passport or driver licence was available in respect of the 20 adults. An Employment History and or Curriculum Vitae were available in respect of the 20 adults.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two validated references was not on file in respect of 1 adult from a past employers or a source other than a previous employer.

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

The registered provider stated in their response that:

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

- (2)
- (a)(b) References were sought and validated immediately and in future vetting procedures will be carried out prior to working with children.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of references were submitted.

### Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector reviewed the evidence submitted and has deem it has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) A review of attendance records/roster showed that a sufficient number of adults were provided to work with children whenever the service was in operation.
- On the morning of the announced inspection there were 18 adults working directly with 71 preschool children in the morning and 17 adults working with 67 preschool children in the afternoon.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was complied with in the service for the respective age group in a full day care service.

### 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.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1) A sample of the children's records were reviewed by the inspectors, of the 78 children attending the service, a total of 16 records were reviewed, the records contained the elements (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, ) as outlined below.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The 16 records of children contain the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4) The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children's records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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, 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

19(1)(a) and (b)

##### Basic Needs

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times, but there was flexibility. The children had fruit and sandwiches for the morning snack. At 12pm to 12:30 pm the children had spaghetti bolognese with cheese, in the afternoon children were offered wraps and fruit.
- Mealtimes were observed to be relax, sociable and staff engaged in a positive way with children.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The children were observed washing their hands before eating their morning snack, outdoor play and after toileting and messy play. Hand washing was both encouraged and supervised by the adults.
- The children were encouraged to be independent at toileting and supported by staff as required.
- Children who wore nappies had their nappies changed on a regular basis, in a timely manner by staff in the designated nappy changing area.
- All the children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment, both indoors and outdoors.
- The infants and children were not in a highchair or other piece of equipment that constrains their movement, for longer than fifteen minutes, other than at meals or snack times.
- There was an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate the numbers of children attending the service.

### Supporting Relationships

- Staff communicated with parents on an informal basis at drop off and collections times and through the service's childcare application device.
- All the children had the opportunity to play outside for physical exercise and movement.
- Staff responded to infants cues in a timely and appropriate way when they cried or became upset.
- Children language development was encouraged, they were observed reading books and engaged with adults and other children on the content of the books. Children played in small groups with animal jigsaws and discussed with one another what animal they to make. At story time adults created an interactive experience for children, which allowed them to share their views and on stories. Each child was given the opportunity to discuss what they were doing and their interests with their peers and adults.
- Through the programme of activities children had the opportunity to interact in small and large groups and were given the opportunity and encouraged by adults to take the lead and engage with their peers
- Children transitions were supported within the service and to the local primary school. There was evidence that these were well planned and organised by staff to make the transition comfortable and as easy as possible.

### Non-Compliance Information

19(1)(a) and (b)

#### Basic Needs:

- Soft seating was not provided in the playroom for children to rest during the day.

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

The registered provider stated in their response that:

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A review of all relaxation areas was completed to ensure there is adequate soft seating is in place. Soft seating is now available.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Receipt submitted for soft seating.

### Summary Comment

The early years inspector has reviewed the evidence submitted and has deemed it has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

## 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 entrance door into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child. There was a buzzer access system.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure, so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The doors into the kitchen, staff toilet, staff room and utility areas had a system of security.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in each playroom fridge.
- Parents and guardians had been advised of the service's updated drop-off and collection policy.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. Thermostatically controlled warm water was available for use by the children to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- The children were observed washing their hands before eating their morning snack, dinner, toileting and outdoor play. Hand washing was supervised by the staff.
- Airtight sealable bins were available for the disposal of used nappies in the nappy changing areas.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage containers.
- Children's soothers were sterilised in accordance with best practice guidance.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposal paper towels and disinfectant spray.

### Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room with 15 cots and stackable beds were also available for older children for sleep.
- The service kept physical sleep checks on the service childcare applications. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy.
- The sleep room temperature was maintained between 20 °C and 16 °C on the day of inspection.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child. All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in sealed labelled containers within the sleep room.
- Cellular blankets that allow air to circulate were used for all children under 2 years of age.

### Outing:

- The service did not conduct outings.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

- In conflict with the services nappy changing policy, the correct procedure was not carried out by staff at nappy changing. Staff were observed not washing their hands prior to nappy changing and after nappy changing wearing the gloves and aprons back into the playrooms. This may pose a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider responded to say that:

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

Training has been provided for all staff on nappy changing procedure with additional focus on the need for handwashing prior to and after changing a nappy. Nappy changing will be monitored in future by the management team.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Nappy changing policy was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was reviewed by the early years inspector and it is deemed that it has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

### 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 provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. There were 10 staff member who had a current training in first aid for children and two had first aid responder.
- (2)(a) There was one large first aid box which was easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in service office.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-  
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

- The service had 39 children in nappies on the day of inspection and only had 3 nappy changing unit, when 4 were required. The service requires one nappy changing unit, including a wash hand basin and changing mat for every 11 children requiring nappy changing.

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

The registered provider responded to say that:

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

In future an adequate number of nappy changing facilities will be provided, and we are awaiting a builder to install an extra new nappy changing unit before the end of August 2023.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The early years inspector reviewed the registered providers response and has deemed it has met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations.