

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LK003
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Name of Service:	Limerick Social Service Council Child and Family Centre
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Address of Service:	Limerick Social Service Council Child & Family Centre Roxboro Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 X2TR
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kevin O'Farrell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	10/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
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Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan M Riordan
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

This full day service operates from the Child and Family Centre, Roxboro, Limerick. The service caters for children aged 6 months to 5 years, Monday – Friday, 08.30 – 17.30 hours for 50 weeks of the year. The service is registered to cater for 84 children at any one time. It has three playrooms located on the ground floor, two playrooms on the first floor and two sleep rooms. There is a staff room, office and adequate sanitary facilities for the children and adults. Facilities for outdoor play are available and there is a direct link to the primary school located nearby to facilitate drop off and collection of preschool children.

Staffing

There are 19 staff on the staff roster working directly with the children and the designated person in charge is also available to cover for staff breaks. The Registered provider does not work on site in the service.

All of the staff hold a qualification in early years care and education ranging from level 5 to 9 on the national qualification's framework.

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 9,11,19,23,24,25,26 and 28. 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 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge or the deputy person in charge was available on the premises.

(2) The manager had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent. All staff files for adults employed in the service were examined and each file contained the following information.

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer were available for all staff.

(b) References from sources other than past employers were available where required.

(c) Vetting disclosures were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for a staff member who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.

(3) Vetting procedures for all staff were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All staff working directly with the children had childcare qualifications at a minimum level 5 on the national qualification framework document.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 14 staff working across 5 rooms with 49 children present in the morning and 44 children present in the afternoon. The minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each room.

- Baby Room – There were 5 children (0-18 months) and 2 staff present.
- Wobbler Room - There were 5 children (1-2 years) and 2 staff present.
- Toddler Room - There were 9 children (2-3 years) and 4 staff present.
- Preschool Room 1 - There were 14 children (4 years) and 4 staff present.
- Preschool Room 2 - There were 16 children (3 – 4 years) and 4 staff present.

Additional staff were available to cover breaks and prepare food.

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

(1)(a)BASIC NEEDS:

The service promoted healthy eating with a detailed policy shared with parents. A two-week menu plan was displayed, and meals were served with attention to variety and dietary needs. On the inspection day, children were served vegetarian pasta, vegetables, mashed potatoes, garlic bread, with a drink of water. Mealtimes were seen as social occasions, with staff interacting with children at their level.

Childrens drinks were easily accessible in each room. Parents in the wobbler room were encouraged to introduce cup feeding and most children were progressing to beakers and cups in place of bottles.

Nappy-changing rooms were well-equipped, ventilated, and maintain in a clean and hygienic state. . Nappy changing policies were displayed on the wall next to the changing units.

Sleep rooms for babies, wobblers and toddlers were comfortable and sleeping children were monitored with soft lighting and music creating a restful atmosphere. Children under 2 years had access to a separate sleep room next to their playrooms. Standard cots were in use. Each cot was positioned a safe distance from each other. Children were physically checked every 10 minutes, and all checks were documented. Low level beds were used for children over 2 years.

Children enjoyed long outdoor play periods with access to a sensory room when needed. Parents received regular updates on children's activities via electronic communication.

All children had access to a change of clothes if needed. Outdoor warm and waterproof clothing were available for all children. The large outdoor open plan space was zoned, and staff remained within their designated zone therefore each area was supervised by staff at all times and this maintained childrens safety.

Staff were observed interacting well with the children, using soft tones of voice, using the child's name and getting down to their level and making eye contact. This supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

Staff were observed to be actively involved in children's play in each of the rooms of the service where they initiated play and joined in the games when invited by the children.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The environment was carefully designed for different age groups. The baby room had soft floor matting, low-level climbing equipment, and sensory toys to encourage development. Outdoor play spaces were adjacent to the baby room, with safe, rubber-matted areas for play. Wobbler and Toddler age groups had access to lots of sensory play, climbing frames, and educational materials. The outdoor areas featured a large, well-planned space with large grassed hilly ground providing natural elements, ride-on toys, and timber cabins for imaginative play. All areas were equipped to be safe and conducive to learning and play, with careful supervision. Accessible open shelving was used to store and display all equipment. Play materials were accessible in baskets within easy reach of the children. Adult seating was accessible in all rooms to facilitate staff sitting and holding children during feeding and rest times.

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. Garda vetting was available for all staff members on the staff roster, however the vetting disclosure for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the early years inspectorate regulatory notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. It is acknowledged that the updated garda vetting documentation was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate on 20/02/2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

All Garda Vetting renewals will be completed within the correct timeframes every three years.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The required Garda Vetting documentation was submitted to the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the person in charge address the non-compliance identified in Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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 who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member on arrival and on departure.

(3)(a) No persons other than the following could enter the service without being approved by a staff member

- (i) A pre-school child attending the service.
- (ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.
- (iii) An employee.
- (iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A visitor book was maintained which recorded the name of every adult who entered the service, the time they spent in the service, the reason they entered, contact phone numbers and the person who allowed them to enter.

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) Sixteen staff members held current certification in first aid responder for children were available on the premises for the hours of operation of the service.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the hallway and in each playroom.

(b) The first aid box was available at all times if required by a child.

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) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place in January 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis. The maintenance record demonstrated that the firefighting equipment were last service in September 2024. The smoke alarm system was serviced in December 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed each playroom and the hallway outside the playrooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended and had an expiry date of 31/12/2025.