

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2020LK003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Limerick Social Service Council Child and Family Centre		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Limerick Social Service Council Child & Family Centre, Roxboro, Limerick		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 X2TR		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Kevin O'Farrell		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/03/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	49	PM 43
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Ryan M Riordan		
<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 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 –17.30hours for 50 weeks of the year. The service can cater for 84 children at any one time. It has three playrooms located on the ground floor, two playrooms on the upper ground 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 17 staff on the staff roster working directly with the children and the designated person in charge is also available to cover for staff breaks.

All of the staff hold a qualification in early years care and education ranging from level 6 to 9 on the National Qualifications 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 and premises. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the baby room, wobbler room and toddler room.

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.

### Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received to the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of 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.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

### 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.
- (d) Police vetting was available for a staff member who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.
- (4) All staff had childcare qualifications at a minimum level 5 on the national qualification framework document.
- (7)(a) Induction training records pertaining to policies and procedures of the service were available for all staff. Supervision records were available for all staff working in the service which demonstrated meetings held between the manager and individual staff.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Compliance Information

All policies and procedures for the service were reviewed and updated by the management committee in December 2023.

The following policies were reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

1. Supervision of Staff policy.
2. Supervision of children- indoors and outdoors policy.
3. Healthy Eating policy.
4. Outdoor play policy.

### 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 43 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 (0-18 months) children and 2 staff present.
- Wobbler Room - there were 7 (1-2 years) children and 2 staff present.
- Toddler Room - there were 9 (2-3 years) children and 2 staff present.
- Preschool Room 1 - there were 16 (4 years) children and 4 staff present.
- Preschool Room 2 - there were 12 (3 – 4 years) children and 3 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, and*

#### Compliance Information

##### **BASIC NEEDS:**

There was a healthy eating policy available at the service and a detailed menu plan was in place for each day. On the day of the inspection potatoes, vegetables and gravy were served to the younger age group and the older children were served pasta with a tomato sauce and vegetables. Monday was a meat free day at the service.

Childrens drinks were easily accessible in each room. Parents of the younger children provided formula powder and cooled boiled water. Staff mixed the formula and the water, and bottles were given at room temperature. All unused formula feeds were discarded following each feed. 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 facilities were located next to all rooms on the ground floor. Waist high changing units were provided. Children nappies and toiletries were stored in labelled baskets within easy reach of staff. Nappy changing policies were displayed on the wall next to the baby changing unit.

All children had access to a change of clothes if needed. Outdoor warm and waterproof clothing were available for all children.

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.

A large outdoor play area surrounded the perimeters of the facility. Children in the wobbler, toddler and preschool rooms were observed to play outdoors on the day of inspection.

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 service operated from a purposely designed building. Throughout each room of the service the physical layout was designed to be stimulating, challenging, and interesting for children.

Each room on the ground floor accommodating the younger children was planned to meet the developmental needs of the age group in these rooms. There were lots of soft floor coverings to facilitate floor play and activities. Low level wash hand basins facilitated regular handwashing for the children. Low level tables and chairs were used for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes. 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.

The outdoor areas provided space and opportunities for children to run, jump, climb steps, balance, play ball games and use ride on toys. Mud kitchens provided space for imaginative play. Lots of areas for digging and planting were available outside.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### BASIC NEEDS:

1. A child in the wobbler room aged between 1-2 years was observed drinking from a bottle as she settled to sleep in her cot. While staff checked the child every 10 minutes, no staff remained with the child while she had the bottle. This practice is at variance with the safe sleep policy where children did not bottle-feed while going to sleep in cots. Also, the healthy eating policy of the service stated, 'children will be supervised at all times when eating and drinking'.
2. Children in the baby room were not outdoors on the day of the inspection and staff stated 'they had not been outdoors in weeks'. Outdoor clothing was available, and buggies were available if required to support babies playing outdoors on a regular basis.

This noncompliance was highlighted in a previous inspection report dated 17/04/2023. The corrective and preventative action response forwarded to the Early Years inspectorate at the time stated 'An enclosed outdoor area has been put in place to ensure the babies have access to the outdoor area at all times. It is an area designated solely for babies so it is safe and accessible all day'.

This was at variance with the outdoor play policy of the service which stated 'we aim to intend children play outdoors each day'.

#### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

3. Much of the play materials in the Babby, Wobbler and Toddler rooms were battery operated plastic toys. There was a lack of open-ended natural play equipment.
4. There were limited sheltered areas in the outside playgrounds. This limited access to the outdoors in wet weather or in very warm weather. Younger children did not have a separate outdoor space developed. An enclosed safe and comfortable outdoor area to protect them from more mobile and active children was not accessible.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Staff will remain in the sleep room to supervise a child if they need a bottle while dropping off to sleep.
2. The outdoor play space for the babies has been replaced and babies play outdoors on a daily basis.
3. Open ended natural play materials have been provided in the three playrooms downstairs.
4. Plans have been put in place to develop the outdoor play spaces for the three rooms downstairs.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The manager will ensure that all staff are familiar with the safe sleep policy.

The play area for the babies will remain in place and plans have been submitted to further develop the outdoor play area.

## Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the manager of the service meet with the regulatory requirements of regulation 19 under point 1, 2, and 3.

The findings documented under regulation 19 point 4 remain non-compliant as the response did not provide adequate assurance that the non-compliance will be rectified.

### 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

##### Infection Control:

1. Staff in the Baby room did not wear aprons when changing nappies. This was at variance with the procedures outlined in the nappy changing policy that was displayed. In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms staff wore gloves and an apron while changing children's nappies. However, when children were changed staff were observed returning children to their rooms prior to removing their gloves and apron and prior to handwashing. This posed a potential risk of cross infection in the service.
2. Staff in the wobbler and toddler rooms were observed to use hand sanitiser as opposed to washing their hands with hot water and soap following nappy changes. This posed a potential risk of cross infection in the service.

##### General Safety:

3. The lobby next to the sanitary accommodation in the wobbler room was used for storage and contained a considerable amount of play and work equipment. It also contained staff handbags on a low-level table. This posed a safety hazard and it also inhibited access to the toilets for both children and staff.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Aprons will be available for staff to wear while nappy changing. Staff will remove their aprons and gloves before they return to the rooms.
2. Training has taken place to review the nappy changing policy and the importance of hand washing.
3. All items have been removed from the lobby. Staff will store their personal belongings in their lockers.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Not required.

#### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the manager of the service meet with the regulatory requirements of regulation 23.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

Each child was under the supervision of a staff member at all times.

Children were supervised primarily by sight and also within a short hearing distance.

Supervision considered the correct adult /child ratios, the individual needs of the child and the activities being engaged in at the time.

Staff constantly moved around the rooms and outdoor play area so that all areas were adequately supervised.

At the end of the outdoors session all areas were checked to ensure no child was left outside unsupervised.

A sign in and out sheet was completed by designated staff to ensure all children were accounted for when going outdoors and when returning to the room. The sheet was displayed at the back door and was signed by staff.

Staff stated that they also counted the number of children who had returned to the playroom when they had changed out of their wet gear in the hallway.