

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LK005
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Name of Service:	Hope Childcare
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Address of Service:	Rathwood, Murroe, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 Y6T8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sherene Powell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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
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Description of service

This is a registered private service established in 2020. There are two buildings on the premises, Wing A is the crèche facility and Wing B is a two-storey building providing sessional and full day care to preschool children.

The crèche facility is a single storey premises that has 2 playrooms in operation, the Toddlers and the Baby playrooms, 2 sleep rooms, sanitary facilities for the children and adults, an office and a kitchen area.

The two-storey premises have 2 playrooms, playroom 1 located downstairs and playroom 2 upstairs to facilitate the older children attending for the sessional and full day care. Each playroom has its own sanitary facilities for the children.

The service has a number of outdoor spaces with a variety of surfaces such as grass, tarmac, and all-weather areas.

There is a registered school aged service available in the service.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in this service. There are 8 staff members including the manager employed to work in the service.

All the staff working with the preschool children hold an appropriate childcare qualification in childcare.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 27 and 29. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider has not informed the Early Years Inspectorate that the person in charge in the service on the day of the inspection differs from the named person on the registrar of services.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated that:

Following the inspection a Change of Circumstances (CIC) was completed and submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 12th of February, reflecting the necessary update with the name of the person in charge at the time of the inspection. This submission has since been approved.

The service will ensure that any changes to the person in charge are promptly communicated to the Early Years Inspectorate to ensure the records are always up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

The CIC document was submitted and approved by the registration office.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted a change of circumstances to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 12th of February detailing the required changes.

The evidence was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 8 Notification of change in Circumstances.

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.

(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) The registered provider had a designated person in charge and a named person who could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present in the service on the day of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- (2) All staff files were viewed on the day and the following information was in place:

- (a) There were written, past employer's references available in respect of the adults working in the service, with recorded validations where required.
- (b) There were references available from sources other than past employers on file where required.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of all the adults in the service. The vetting was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from Jan 01/01/2024.
- (d) Police vetting was available for the adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than 6 months.
- (3) The vetting procedures 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) The adults working directly with the children in the service all held an award in Early Childhood Care & Education ranging from Level 5 to 8.

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) The registered provider had ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working with the children. The adult child ratios was correct on the day of the inspection.
- (2) There were 7 staff working directly with 27 preschool children in the morning and 7 staff working with 21 preschool children in the afternoon.
- The person in charge was available to cover meals breaks and other additional activities identified by the staff working in each playroom.

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 in place at the facility. Meals followed the procedures outlined in the service's policy, with a morning snack and dinner provided each day. The menu plan was available and shared with all parents. There was yogurt and fruit available for the morning snack followed by a chicken casserole, vegetable and mash potatoes. The children had access to their bottles of water throughout the day located on a low shelf for easy access.

Nappy changing facilities were located close to both the Toddler and Wobbler playrooms with the liquid soap, paper towels, and foot-operated, lidded bins for waste disposal accessible. Children could independently go to the toilets close to the Preschool rooms, with staff supervision available close by while children were using the facility. All toilet areas were ventilated with openable windows.

Rest areas in each room had a two-seater couch, soft floor mats, cushions, and books, while two separate sleep room with 8 cots were provided for children who need to sleep during the day. Low level beds were available for the older children, positioned in the Toddler room when needed.

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. The outdoor areas provided space and opportunities for children to run, jump, climb steps, balance, play ball games and use ride on toys. The large sand tray and mud kitchens provided opportunities for imaginative play. Lots of areas for digging and planting were available in the garden area.

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

On the day qualified staff were supervising the preschool in the indoor and outdoor areas. The layout allowed for ease of visual supervision while allowing children quiet time and space.

Children were supervised primarily by sight and supervision for short intervals by sound was allowed when children were independently using the toilet. However, the staff were always close by where they could talk to the children who were out of sight.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The outdoor area was surrounded by a high fence. Staff were outdoors at all times supervising the children while playing outside.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.

(d) Routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(b)
Secure access to the premises was not provided. The gate entrance at the carpark had a handle located above the height of a child but was unlocked. To ensure the safety of all children and staff on the premises, a system must be in place at the entrance to the premises to prevent any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider stated that:

All entrances to the building have been secured. As a result, no visitor or external party can access the premises without a staff member letting them in. Additionally, all external gates are kept locked when not in use (i.e. when the service is closed) to further ensure the safety and security of the service. The entire premises are alarmed when the service is closed. The alarm is triggered as soon as anyone approaches the gates to access the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted.

Photographic evidence attached.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 29 Premises.