

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2020MH003

**Name of Service:** Reach for the Stars

**Address of Service:** 116 Cnoc Tiarnach, St Seachnalls Road, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath

**Eircode:** A85 XE86

**Name of Registered Provider:** Katarzyna Wlodarska

**Service type:** Full Day, Part Time

**Date of Inspection:** 23/10/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	31
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Tusla Early Years Inspectorate  
Meath Child & Parent Support Hub,  
Commons Road,  
Navan,  
Co. Meath

**Inspection undertaken by:** D. Murray

**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

Reach for the Stars is a privately owned service that has been in operation since 2020. The service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Hours of operation are from 07:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday to Friday.

The building consists of 3 care rooms:

**Twinkle Stars** room catered for children from 2 to 3 years.

**Shining Stars** and the **Rising Stars** Rooms provide care and education to children from 3 to 6 years.

Other rooms in the service included sanitary facilities with 2 areas for nappy changing, office, staff room and, kitchen. An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises

### Staffing

Employed to work in the service were the manager, 6 childcare staff and a cook. Present on the day of inspection were the manager ,4 childcare staff and 1 staff member commencing employment at 2pm. An area manager arrived to the service at 11am to provide support to facilitate the inspection.

### 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 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 wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, 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
- (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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) Nine staff files were reviewed.

- Eighteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 9 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Eight childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were the manager and 4 adults working directly with the 32 children attending the service. An additional staff member commenced work at 2pm as 2 morning staff were finishing for the day. An area manager arrived at the service at 11am to provide support to facilitate the inspection.
- (2) The correct adult/child ratios were maintained in the rooms throughout the inspection:
- The Twinkle Stars room had 1 staff member with 6 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years.
- The Shining Stars room had 1 staff member with 9 children ranging in age from 3 to 4 years.
- The Rising Stars room had 2 adults with 16 children ranging in age from 3 to 5 years.
- All children were attending the service on a full day care basis.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster, assurance was provided that there were 2 adults present on the premises at all times.

## 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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of the children especially the children with additional needs. Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as holding the child, speaking to them softly, promoting turn taking and sharing and having a change of environment outdoors to support transitions. Children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement and reassurance.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. The curriculum was child led incorporating the themes of the month which were "Halloween" and "Autumn" with children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.

#### Supporting relationships around children:

- The children all sat around in groups at lunch time which created a positive atmosphere where children had the opportunity to interact and developing relationships.

- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging. A record was kept in the Twinkle Stars room of issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed onto parents or guardians by an electronic tablet device.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Sleep mats were placed on the floor in the Twinkle Stars room for the children over 2 years requiring sleep. Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in all care rooms for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises, which was enclosed by walls with 2 secure side gates. The surface area consisted of artificial grass. A partially sheltered area permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a mud kitchen, nature table with soil, plastic play house, ride on tricycles, plastic slides, pouring wall, wooden bench for outdoor activities, footballs and tyres.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

All food was provided for the children attending the service. A snack menu was available along with a 2 week menu with a variety of dishes including meat, poultry and fish for the main hot meal. All food was prepared and cooked onsite. Breakfast was provided between 07:30am and 08:45am if required with a choice of cereals. On the day of inspection morning snack was served at 10am which consisted of crackers, jam, chopped fruit and peppers. The main meal of the day was served at 11:40am which consisted of meat balls, mash potatoes, peas and gravy. An afternoon snack was served at 3pm which consisted of croissants and chopped up grapes. For children staying late additional snacks were available if required. The children's drinks bottles were stored on a shelf in the care rooms and accessible for the children throughout the day

## 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 following safety measures were observed:

- On the day of inspection both the indoor and outdoor environment appeared safe. Risk assessments were conducted on a daily basis . The manager and staff members had a clear understanding of their role and range of responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.

##### Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the Twinkle Stars room was maintained between 18 to 22<sup>0</sup>C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Children on sleep mats were supervised at all times by staff members.

##### Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.

## 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 had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

## 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 of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 16/09/2024.

(b) A record was maintained of the firefighting equipment on the premises. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on 16/07/2024. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 16/07/2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

## 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 the pre-school service is adequately insured for 45 children, expiry date on the insurance certificate was dated 27/03/2025.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-  
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. In the Shining Stars room, the leatherette on the corners of the children's seats were torn and did not provide a smooth surface for adequate cleaning.
  2. In the Rising Stars room, the material on the 2 pink children's arm chairs were visibly dirty and did not have a wipeable surface.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

1&2 All defective seating was removed from the Shining Stars and the Rising Stars rooms. Cushions were purchased instead.

The manager will ensure that all equipment will be included on the daily risk assessment to ensure infection control measure are maintained. Any new equipment purchased will either have a wipeable surface or covering that can be washed in a machine.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of cushions purchased.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances for Regulation 29(d). The response received has been reviewed and accepted.