

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020RN001
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Name of Service:	Gingerbread Preschool
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Address of Service:	22 Waterville, Bealnamulla, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	N37 E1H2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rui Wu
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
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Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

The service operates from a ground floor room within the registered providers detached residential home. It is situated in a housing estate in Bealnamulla on the outskirts of the town of Athlone. In addition to the playroom, there is a separate sanitary accommodation for the preschool children. A secure outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single handedly. There is an emergency person available within close proximity to act if an emergency arose.

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.

Additional Information

On the day of the inspection, an immediate action notice was issued, for Regulation 23 (Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child) Please see body of report for more detail.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The registered provider was a designated person in charge of operating the service on the day of the inspection. An emergency person was available if required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service at all times during the inspection.

(2) (a)(b) Two written validated references were on file for each adult and were provided from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each adult.

The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police clearance was available for the two adults who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Relevant documentation of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications framework was furnished for the registered provider.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) There was one adult working with 8 children on the day of inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adult to child ratio was adhered to on the day of inspection
- (8)(c) An emergency person familiar with the operation of the service was within close proximity and available to attend to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)(b)(c)(d)(e) and (f)
- Four of the eight children’s records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspector.
- The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.
- The four children’s records contained the following:
- (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 stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- (d) 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.
- (e) Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- (f) 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
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was available or recorded on the child's record.
- (h) A record of any immunisations the child has had was recorded on the child's records
- (i) Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency

(4) & (5)

The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from the file review indicated, that the pre-school had a system to allow 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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- The children were provided with plates and plastic cutlery to consume their lunch.
- Toilet trained children were able to access the toilet when required.
- The children were encouraged to be independent with supervision from the adult provided.
- Care was given to the personal hygiene of the children.
- Children were encouraged and supervised by the adult to wash their hands prior to eating, toileting, outdoor play and messy play activities. A change of clothes is kept on the premises should they be required.
- Aprons were available for messy play activities.

- The playroom contained a dedicated area where children could relax during the day. A readily cleanable sleep mat was available should a child wish to opt out of activities/relax during the session.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children could move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, stacking, at artwork, dancing to action songs, and at messy play.
The registered provider read stories and children questioned the characters and gave their views. The adult used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’ ‘how many are there?’, and ‘where is that?’. The adult acknowledged a child’s achievements, and the children were observed having fun.
In the outdoor area, the children on the swing set, and the slides, at the playhouse, walking, running, and on the see saw.
- Outdoor play time formed an important part of the daily routine, and the children played outdoors for part of the inspection.
- The adult was observed to engage positively with the children and was consistent in the management of children’s behaviour. Minor incidents were dealt with calmly and prevented from escalating. Children were observed to respond well to the guidance given by the adult. The adult was able to recount positive approaches for managing children’s behaviour.
- The exchange of relevant information regarding the care of the child were communicated at handover and collection times. It was advised that contact would be carried out by phone to a parent or parents should the need arise.
- Positive engagements between the adult and the children were observed. The adult spoke with the children at their level and used positive language in a friendly tone when speaking to the children. The children in turn responded positively to the adult. The adult was able to describe to the inspector children’s individual care routines, preferences, and dislikes.
- The pre-school room was bright and colourful. Low level tables and chairs were in place and low-level open shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children.
- The room was laid out with clearly defined areas of play to include arts and crafts, large- and small-scale construction and manipulative materials; picture books, problem solving toys (e.g., jigsaws and shape sorters), role and pretend play (e.g., play kitchen, play garage); messy play and small world toys (e.g., play animals, transport toys, play figures). A soft matted area was also provided for circle time activities.

- Wall art and visual displays on the children’s artwork to include their shamrocks, their photos, their birthdays, the seasons, and the world added additional decorative features to the indoor play environment.
- An extensive secure outdoor play area was located to the rear of the pre-school premises. This was equipped with a slide, tunnel, a playhouse, a seesaw, sand play area with digging and pouring accessories, and a rocker. Ball games were also available.

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 was appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play area was secured by wooden fencing and two gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area, or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The doors into the registered providers living accomodation had a system of security.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- There were restrictive access devices on the low-level windows in the playroom, as a safety security precaution.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, outdoor play, messy play and after blowing their noses. The children washed their hands under supervision prior to consuming their snacks.
- Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The playroom had cleaning products and foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room was well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children’s snack break.

- Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately. The adult was observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.
- Fixtures, fittings and play resources were observed to be in a hygienic condition. The adult showed awareness of the services procedures including the management of suspected infection when questioned.
- A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.
- There were cleaning schedules and records for the playroom, sanitary areas, and outdoor area
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playroom.
- There were foot operated lidded bins in the playroom.

Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to a child on the day of the inspection. The adult demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, a temperature of 66.6°C from the hot water tap used by children taken at 10.44am. a temperature of 67.6°C taken at 10.55.am and 73.9°C taken at 11:49am. These water temperatures were above the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent potential risk of scalding.
2. A cover on a four-inch pipe on the footpath in the outdoor area was not securely fixed and could pose a potential tripping hazard.
3. There was a worn lath of wood on the wooden gate, which was broken and had a metal nail exposed, posing a safety risk.
4. The window frame of the playhouse was broken with a sharp edge exposed which could pose a safety risk
5. The children were observed consuming popcorn which could pose a risk of choking.
6. A roof ridge tile was in the grassed area which could pose a potential safety concern

Infection Control:

7. The covering on the goal post and the donut swing was ripped and in poor condition which could prove difficult to effectively clean.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

On 12th and 18th of March and 24th of April; the registered provider advised the office of the early year's inspectorate

General Safety:

1. The plumber has adjusted the system to limit the hot water temperature to a maximum of 42°C. and the energy diverter has been turned off, and the thermostat on the immersion heater has been adjusted.
2. A new metal cover has been installed.
3. The timber on the garden gate has been replaced.
4. The little green window on the playhouse has been removed.
5. A letter has been sent to parents to advise them not to send popcorn in the children's lunchboxes and lunch boxes will be checked to ensure there is no choking hazards such as popcorn and it will not be provided as a party treat by the service.
6. The roof ridge tile has been removed.

Infection Control:

7. A new goalpost and donut swing has been purchased.

and we have added the above non-compliances into our Daily Health & Safety Checklist, so that we can carry out necessary repair and replacement in time if it's required in the future. We will continue to monitor the solar panel system and keep a record of the water temperature to ensure the hot water temperature does not exceed 43°C.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the temperature of the hot water at 41.7°C
2. The new metal cover on the four-inch pipe.
3. The replaced lath of wood on the wooden gate in the outdoor area.
4. The frame removed from the window of the playhouse
5. The letter sent to parents.
6. The roof ridge tile removed from the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

7. The newly purchased goalpost and donut swing.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

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 always available to the children attending the pre-school service. The adult had current training in first aid for children with an expiry of 20/08/2026.

(2)(a) The first aid box was safely stored on a high shelf in the playroom, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) There were items in the first aid box to include plasters, medium and large wound and finger dressings and eye pads which were out of date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) On the 18th of March and 25th of April the registered provider submitted evidence of a newly purchased first aid box and advised that the first aid box has been added into the Daily Health & Safety Checklist to check and ensure all items are in date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the newly purchased first aid box.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliance under Regulation 25.

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 firefighting 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 was on 21/02/2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 7th of October 2024. The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated October 2024.

(4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2025 covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

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) From a visual inspection the premises were of sound and stable structure.
The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appeared to be structurally sound, weather/water-tight, to ensure protection from the weather elements.
The interior floors and ceilings appeared to be well finished, with no evidence of mould.
- (b) Exits were clearly identified and visible during service hours.
Electrical sockets were safe.
Floor coverings were secured and non-slip.
- (c) There was natural lighting from the windows on the outer walls in the playroom.
The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.
- (d) The service had a cleaning schedule.
- (e) A designated staff toilet with a wash hand basin was provided in the registered providers main dwelling.
There was one toilet, and one wash hand basin provided for the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) The wall under the window and the windowsill in the preschool room had evidence of chipped paint.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c) The registered provider submitted a written response on 25th of April to advise that the chipped paint of the wall under the window and the windowsill has been sanded and repainted and the registered provider will check for chipped paint regularly and carry out necessary repair or repaint during children's holidays.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted of the newly painted wall under the windowsill and on the windowsill

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliance under Regulation 29.