

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022GY002
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Name of Service:	Spraoi Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Gort an Ri, Tubber Road, Gort, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 H9RE
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Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and E. Friel.
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Spraioi Early Learning Centre is in a new residential estate, Gort an Ri, on the Tubber Road near the town of Gort, Co Galway. The service provides a full day care and operates between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00. A sessional care programme is available between 09.00 and 12.00, from Monday to Friday, for children aged between 0 and 6 years of age.

The premises consists of five playrooms called the Zebras, Penguins, Turtles, Koalas and Llamas. There were also sanitary facilities, a designated sleep room, two nappy changing areas and a staff room. There is a kitchen where food is prepared on site by a cook. The pre-school children have access to two secure outdoor play areas to the front and the side of the building.

Staffing

The service currently employs 20 adults, which includes the general manager, area manager, manager and 2 adults who work in the kitchen. The registered provider does not work in the service and is not detailed on the staff roster. There were also two students on placement.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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;*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The manager was the person in charge and a deputy manager was available to deputise in their absence.

- (b)** The roster indicated that there was a designated person in charge and a deputy in charge while the pre-school children were on the premises.

(2) Since the last inspection on the 17/7/2025 and 21/07/2025 there were 10 new adults employed in the service and 2 students and these files were reviewed:

- (a)** Nine of the required 22 written and validated references were from past employers.
- (b)** The remaining 13 of 22 written and validated references were from sources other than a past employer.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 12 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 12 adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than 6 months.
- (4) There was evidence that 9 of the new adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 to a level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent. The remaining three adults did not require childcare qualifications as two were students and the other adult worked in the kitchen.
- (7)(a) Documentation was available to evidence that induction of all new staff had taken place and that supervision had been carried out in line with the service policy.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to. There were 15 adults working directly with 62 children in the morning and 15 adults working with 62 children in the afternoon. There were also two students rostered and in the playrooms during the inspection.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least two adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

Compliance Information

16(i) A staff roster was available detailing start, finishing times and break times of staff. The roster also detailed staff cover breaks and the relief staff.

(j) Six of the administration of medication forms available for children were reviewed and these were signed by a parent or a guardian.

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. Snacks were provided by the parents/guardians, the breakfast and the hot meal which was a vegan spaghetti with vegetables and cheese were provided by the service. A fruit snack is also given in the afternoon.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Cutlery and plates were given to children during snack times and the hot meal of the day. Younger

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

children were encouraged to feed themselves by adults in line with their age and stage of development.

- The children had access to water on a low-level table which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty. When children were playing in the outdoor area a water trolley was taken out for children to access when thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Hand washing was observed at appropriate times throughout the day, it was observed prior to snack time, after outdoor play, nappy changing and toileting.
- Each child's privacy and dignity were respected while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- Nappy changing took place as required throughout the day and the correct nappy changing procedure was observed in line with the service policy and best practice.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches in a designated rest and relaxation area in the playrooms.
- The tables and chairs in the playroom were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Children were observed at table top activities, playing in the clearly defined interest areas and in circle time. The children enjoyed outdoors riding tricycles, playing together, art work, messy and sensory play.

Programme of Activities

- The service worked in partnership with parents to enhance each individual child's learning experience while attending the service. All information and observations were shared through the service childcare application which informed curriculum planning.
- Short-, medium- and long-term curriculum planning was in place to support each child's development. The emerging interest of the child was included in the short term planning.
- Children language development was encouraged; they were observed reading books and engaged with adults and other children on the content of the books. At story time adults created an interactive experience for children, allowing them to share their views on stories.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Through the programme of activities, children had the opportunity to interact in small and large groups and were given the opportunity and encouraged by adults to take the lead and engage with their peers.
- Adults created an environment for easy transitions throughout the session. All transitions during the day involved the children, they took an active role in preparing, assisting the adults, taking the lead at snack time and tidying up. This in turn promoted each child's independence and leadership skills.
- The service is involved with a 'Recycle Reuse Project' in the local town and each playroom created a collage and models to emphasise recycling and how rubbish can damage our environment. It was planned that an exhibition will be held in the local library in conjunction with other services in the coming weeks.

- (3) The inspectors did not witness or hear any practices, throughout the period of inspection, which were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally, physically harmful or neglectful in respect of the early years children attending the service. Adults were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with children. Communication and interactions between adults and children were conducted in a positive, sensitive and caring manner.

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 into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child. There was a buzzer access system.
- The outdoor play areas were secure, so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The temperatures in the playrooms were monitored by the inspectors throughout the day and they were maintained between 18 °C and 22 °C.
- The doors into the kitchen, staff toilet, staff room and utility areas had a system of security.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The three high chairs were fitted with safety harnesses.

Infection Control:

- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in each playroom fridge.
- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. Thermostatically controlled warm water was available for use by the children to facilitate hygienic hand washing. The temperature was maintained between 30.1 °C and 32.3 °C.
- The children were observed washing their hands before eating their morning snack, dinner, toileting and outdoor play. Hand washing was supervised by the staff.
- Airtight, pedal operated, sealable bins were available for the disposal of used nappies in the nappy changing areas. Disposable aprons and gloves were available.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage containers.
- Children's soothers were sterilised in accordance with best practice guidance.
- Waterproof mattresses were fitted and used in all the cots in the designated playroom.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposal paper towels and disinfectant spray.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was available in the event of an emergency and were all within date.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room with six cots, sleep beds and stackable beds were also available for older children for sleep.
- The service kept physical sleep checks on the service childcare applications. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy.
- The sleep room temperature was maintained between 16 °C and 20 °C. When children were put down on sleep beds and sleep mats in the playrooms the temperature was maintained between 18 °C and 22 °C. The temperatures were regularly checked throughout the day.
- All 8 sleep plans were reviewed by the inspectors for children over 15 months who were on sleep beds on the day. These were compliant with the service policy and signed by the parents /guardians.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- A supply of clean linen was available for each child. All linen provided was clean, dry and stored in sealed labelled containers within the sleep room.
- Cellular blankets that allow air to circulate were used for all children under 1 year of age.

Fire Safety:

- The service conducted monthly fire drills and these were documented.

Outing:

- The manager stated that the service does carry out outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Contrary to the administration medication / medication management policy an adult did not check the expiry date on the medication to be administered to a child which was out of date. This may pose as a safety risk to a preschool child if administered.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The management team has reissued the medication administration policy. Staff have been given a refresher demonstration on the procedure of administering medication. A paper copy of the administration of medication consent form has been reinstated to ensure that expiries and medication requirements are cross checked before administration.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the administration form was submitted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The documentation and statement by the registered provider have been reviewed and has been deemed to have met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had first aid responder with an in-date certificate.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the office.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available while the children were attending the pre-school service.

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 monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 31 March 2026.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service date 10 July 2025.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system had the last annual service date on the 20 January 2026.
- (4) Notices were displayed in the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire on the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

During the inspection the general manager, area manager, manager and staff ensured that the preschool children were adequately supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments.

The adult / child ratio was maintained in each playroom and in the outdoor play area. This was evidenced by the staff roster and observations by the inspectors on the day.

It was observed on the day that the staff ensured that children were supervised during sleep, mealtimes, in the playrooms, in the outdoor play area, while children used the sanitary areas and during nappy changing. The staff were observed to supervise children by sound and by sight.