

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2022WX001		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	First Steps Ferns Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Alder court, Ferns, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford		
<b>Eircode:</b>	Y21 A2X6		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Belynda Cahill		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	30/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM 12
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital Ferrybank Wexford		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. Ryan		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

First Steps Ferns is a full day care service operating from a premises in the village of Ferns. The service opens from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and caters for children from 1 to 6 years of age. The service consists of two early years room (upstairs Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) room and downstairs toddler room), toilets, an office, kitchen and outdoor play area.

### Staffing

There were five staff working on the day of inspection. The registered provider was on the premises and assisted as needed in the rooms. All staff working directly with the children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at the minimum Level 5 and above 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection focused on the following regulations.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment.

Regulation 10- Policies.

Regulation 11- Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of the child.

Regulation 25 -First aid.

Regulation 26- Fire safety and

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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 registered provider, 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, and*

*(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)

On the day of the inspection there was a designated person in charge of the service. The registered provider arrived at the service at 11am and remained on the premises for the remainder of the inspection.

(b)

There was a person in charge for the duration of the inspection.

The staff files for seven staff working directly with children were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated references for all employees were kept in each staff member's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for two staff who had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

(4)

Certificates of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the early years children were available on file.

### 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

There were written policies, procedures, and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The following sample of policies were reviewed on this inspection were found to be satisfactory and specific to the setting:

- Behaviour management policy,
- Medication policy,
- Accidents and incidents policy,
- Nappy changing policy,
- Healthy eating and the infection control policy
- Infection control
- Hand Hygiene 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service.

(2)

During the morning there were 24 children being directly cared for by 4 staff. During the afternoon there were 12 children being directly cared for by 4 staff, ensuring there were adequate staff available to work with the children and to maintain staff/child ratios at all times. The registered provider worked directly with the children in the rooms on the day of inspection.

### 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 and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service focusing on the areas of basic needs and supporting relationships on the day of inspection.

The parents supply all the food for the children attending, which was stored in fridges in the service. A variety of snacks, homemade dinners, sandwiches, fruit and yogurts were seen on the day. Children's drink bottles and beakers are freely available to them.

Children in upstairs ECCE room enjoyed a variety of activities during the day including outdoor play, circle time, table top activities and free play. The room was warm, bright and well laid out. Interest areas were well resourced and equipped. The room had a home corner, dress up clothes, art station, sensory area with large beanbags, books, sand trays, open shelves, and family and birthday walls. A quiet area in the corner of the room was used in the afternoon by children who wished to nap or sleep. The staff set up beds with sheets and blankets for the children.

In the downstairs toddler room, children engaged in painting and gluing as their tabletop activity, with the children enjoying painting their hands also. The children had access to the outdoor play area which is directly off the toddler room. Sleep needs are met, with children placed to sleep when they show signs of tiredness and/or as part of their daily routine. Children were held and cuddled when they woke up from sleep. A child who bumped into another child and got upset was comforted and given their teddy from home. Nappy changing was carried out regularly during the day.

The parents dropped and collected their children from each room. They spoke with staff daily and were given feedback on their child's day. A notice board was clearly displayed in the entrance hall for parents and visitors to see.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Basis needs:

1. Children in the toddler room were observed to have soothers left in their mouths for long periods. For example, in the morning three children had soothers in their mouth for up to 2-hours, including when they went outside and during a tabletop activity. In the afternoon four children were observed with soothers in their mouths for long periods from sleep time till their afternoon snack. Using a soother for prolonged periods can hamper a child's language skills and damage to oral development.
2. Transitions between activities on the day were disorganised and chaotic. For example, in the ECCE room, the morning snack routine was not calm. Children were observed wandering away from the tables after having their hands washed, pushing and pulling at plates and bottles put out on the table, returning to play with toys, not sitting down for their food and a number of children approaching the inspector to open their snacks. In the toddler room, the organised activity was not prepared fully before starting. Children were not properly set up; they were given paint before their aprons were put on and the staff weren't ready to support the children with the painting activity. There was a lot of wandering and climbing observed in the room and children not engaged in listening.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has spoken with staff around the use of soothers in the room. This will be discussed at the next staff meeting. Staff will work with children and provide toys and distraction while reducing the use of soothers.

2. Staff will work to ensure that activities were better planned, including meal times. A staff member has been delegated roles to support this practice.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documents submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The registered providers response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

**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 to the premises was secured with an electronic keypad system. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children.

**Infection Control:**

There was warm water, liquid soap and hand towels available for hygienic handwashing. Foot pedal bins were in use throughout the service. Nappy changing observed in the toddler room was in line with the service policy and good hygiene practices were observed.

**Administration of Medication:**

The service had an administration of medication policy.

**Safe Sleep:**

The service had a designated sleep room, located within the toddler room on the ground floor. The room was equipped with cots. There were sleep mats available for older children. Individual bed linen was available, which was laundered as needed. Staff who spoke with the inspectors, were aware of safe sleep practices for example, how often a sleeping child is physically checked, recording of the observations such as colour, position and breathing rate and the optimum sleep room temperature.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The door to the ECCE room was propped open during the morning. The door to the room was located at the top of the stairs. It is acknowledged that the staff closed the door when requested by the inspector.

#### Infection Control:

2. Nappy changing observed in the morning in the ECCE room was not in line with good infection control measures. A staff member who changed a child's nappy wore no apron, did not wash her hands or the child's hands after the procedure. This posed a risk of faecal contamination and spread of gastrointestinal illness.
3. The toilet door upstairs was propped open, which poses as a risk of cross contamination.
4. The nappy changing mat in the upstairs room was torn and posed as a risk of cross contamination as it cannot be adequately cleaned.
5. The mechanical ventilation in the downstairs nappy changing area was not working fully on the day.
6. Staff in the toddler room were not clear on the correct time soothers were required to stay immersed in sterilising fluid to ensure they were sterilised.
7. There was poor attention to personal hygiene noted in the toddler room. Children's faces were not cleaned after eating and food was observed dried around their mouths and on faces.

#### Administration of Medication:

8. There was no individual care plan in place for a child who required monitoring and administration of medication while in the service. This was not in line with the service's policy on administration of medication.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The door will be kept closed. Staff were advised to ensure the door is kept closed. A sign has been placed on the door.
2. All staff have been reminded of the nappy changing policy. The registered provider will carry out reviews of nappy changing practices in the service.
3. The toilet door will be kept closed. The restrictive device has been removed to allow children the freedom to use the toilet independently.
4. The nappy changing mat was replaced. Monthly reviews of the mats will be carried out.
5. The mechanical ventilation was replaced. A regular review of the ventilation will be carried out.

6. All staff have been updated in striation of soothers. Staff have been reminded to ensure the manufactures instructions are followed.
7. Children’s faces are cleaned on a regular basis. Children will be encouraged to independently wipe their faces and tissues at a lower level will be available.
8. A care plan has been developed in collaboration with the parents, room leader and manager. Going forward staff will ensure that a care plan is in place as required.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A photograph of the sign on the door. Copy of the care plan, Photograph of the new changing mat.

### **Summary Comment**

The registered providers response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation.

## **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)

There were staff trained in first aid for children available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position and was available for use.

### 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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 27 November 2023.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in June and August 2023.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that insurance was in place.