

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023DL003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Meadow Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballygay, Milford, Co. Donegal		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F92 F6YA		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Neasa Mc Bride		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional, Childminder		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	11/01/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM n/a
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N McEndoo		
<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

The premises is in a rural area, 3 km from the town of Milford. The sessional service is located on the grounds of the registered providers family home in a newly renovated building. The service consists of one preschool room, a kitchenette, sanitary accommodation for the children and staff. The children have access to a fenced off outdoor area to the side of the building. Off street parking is available for pickups and drops offs. The registered provider is also separately registered to operate as a childminder with a named emergency contact person.

### Staffing

The registered provider currently operates and works in the sessional service. There are two adults working with the registered provider in the sessional service.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9 Management and Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing levels, and Regulation 19 Health Welfare and development of the child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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*
- (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*

*(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the files of three adults were reviewed.
- The following vetting information was available for these three adults:
- (a) Five written validated references from past employers for three of the adults.
  - (b) One written validated reference from reputable source for one of the adults.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that three adults who work directly with children attending the sessional service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. When the inspector arrived unannounced, there were 3 adults working directly with 13 children.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that on the day of inspection, the adult to child ratio was always maintained at the minimum specified ratios.

### 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

#### Compliance Information

(1)

- The children's learning, development and well-being was observed to be facilitated on the day of inspection.
- The service promoted healthy eating. Snacks were provided by parents and consisted of fruit, sandwiches, and yogurts. An alternative snack was available for a child who had forgotten their lunch. Children were not rushed during snack and ate at their own pace, ensuring enjoyment of the meal.
- Children were encouraged and reminded to drink from their water bottles.
- Children were supported to be independent and were free to choose their own activities or to join in the small group activities that were supported by the adults. The materials supplied in the rooms were age and stage appropriate.
- Children were observed to have access the outdoor area during the day. Children were given the choice to go indoors when they no longer wanted to be outside.
- There was a range of equipment in the outdoor area such as loose parts, sensory and water trays, bubbles, cars and trucks, ball games etc. All supporting the children's social, cognitive, gross, and fine motor development.

(b) The inspector observed appropriate care practices during the inspection.

- Children of toileting age were able to do so independently. They did not have to wait to be brought, and support was given as and when required.

- The presence of a Birthday wall and children's art displays demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.
- On the day of inspection, the weather was cold. Staff ensured children's coats were zipped up with hats, gloves, or scarfs on before going outdoors. Children were encouraged to dress independently with help offered when required.
- Staff interacted well with both each other, and the children in a respectful and responsive manner throughout the morning. Staff used low tones and were down at the child's level when possible.
- Staff were observed to participate in games and activities as well as, sit and chat with children during mealtimes. Interactions were encouraging and promoted positive social experiences for the children.
- Children were observed to be listened to, cuddled, and comforted when they became upset. Staff were kind and sensitive.