

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023GY001
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sonas Early Learning Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit D, Fánán, Letteragh Road, Ragoon, Co. Galway
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 N2XK
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Theresa Murphy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Dates of Inspection:</b>	06/03/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	39	PM	34
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Meehan and A. Mc Carthy.
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Sonas Early Learning Centre is a private full day childcare service located in an urban area of Galway city called Ragoon. It provides full-time, part-time and sessional services for children aged between 1 year to 6 years of age. It operates between 8 am to 6 pm from Monday to Friday. The premises consists of 4 playrooms, sanitary facilities, a designated sleep room, 2 nappy changing areas, staff room and a kitchen. The pre-school children have access to two secure outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider has appointed a manager to manage the service. An area manager was also present on the day of inspection. All staff working with the preschool children hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. An additional staff member was available to prepare, cook and serve food.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 25, 26, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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.

### Additional Information

07/03/2024

An Immediate Action Notice was issued under Regulation 9(2)(c), a mandatory vetting disclosure was not available for 1 adults working in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

07/03/2024

The service manager responded to say that the outstanding vetting for 1 adult had been received and a copy of these vetting disclosures was forwarded in the response to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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) The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection.

All 14 staff files were reviewed including the registered providers:

(2) (a)&(b) Twenty-eight written validated references were on file from a past employer or reputable source for the 14 adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of 13 adults working in the service.

(d) Seven adults worked outside the jurisdiction, for longer than six consecutive months or more, while over the age of 18 years and had the required police vetting disclosure.

- (4) Eleven adults who were working directly with the children, had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) The manager confirmed that a deputy is not available at present and that the service was recruiting another person who would be the deputy. It is acknowledged the area manager arrived at 11 am after the inspector's arrival but was not rostered to work in the service.
- (2)(c) Garda vetting was not available for 1 adult and an immediate action notice was issued on the 07/03/2024.
- (4) One adult working directly with children, did not hold one of the following or have evidence of :
- A minimum award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
  - An exemption from the qualification requirement and confirmation that the Minister accepts this exemption.
  - The qualification requirement or relevant specialist training and the basis on which the capitation may be used for a person employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), detailed in an exemption letter from Pobal.

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

The registered provider stated in her response that:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (1)(b) Following recruitment drive, a deputy manager has been appointed and is presently carrying out all deputising duties. Rosters have been adjusted to allow for a person in charge to be always present on-site during service operating hours.
- (2)(c) A copy of the outstanding garda vetting was submitted on the 07/03/2024 to the inspectorate and in future staff will not be placed on service rosters until a file is complete and is available to the service manager.

- (4) The adult no longer works in the service; the service will ensure that in future all adults employed will have a minimum of a level 5 in in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (1)(b) A roster was submitted with the name of the new deputy manager.
- (2)(c) A copy of the garda vetting was submitted.
- (4) Roster submitted that adult no longer works in the service.

### **Summary Comment**

On review of the evidence submitted and the registered providers response it has been deemed that the service has met the requirements of these part of the regulations.

## **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) On the morning of the inspection, there were thirty-nine preschool children present with 8 adults working directly with, caring and supervising these children.
- In the afternoon, of the inspection, there were thirty-four children present being cared for by 8 adults.
- There was also a kitchen assistant employed from 10am to 1pm to complete kitchen duties.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the day.

## **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

19(1)(a)

#### BASIC NEEDS:

- The children ate their snacks provided by their parents and guardians. Perishable items were stored in the fridge prior to snack time. The morning snack consisted of fruit, crackers, cheese and sandwiches and the choice of milk or water.
- Crockery and plates were offered and used during children's snack and meal times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Children's own water bottles were available and accessible on a drinks table to allow children to self-serve when thirsty in each playroom.
- The adults supervised children's hand washing before and after snack time and after toileting.
- The children who were toilet trained, toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- Children in nappies were changed in a timely manner by adults and the correct procedure was observed.
- Children were observed to be put down to sleep as required and 10-minute physical sleep checks were carried out.
- Soft seated areas were available in the playrooms and a designated sleep room was available for children under 2 years of age.

#### SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- Information was shared with parents and guardians in relation to their child's care during the day at collection times, via text messages, by phone calls, a multi-media application.
- Adults interacted in a positive way with the children e.g., they sat at children's level, maintained good eye contact and were familiar with each child's needs.
- The service was observed to be respectful of inclusion and diversity within the setting. Childrens dietary requirements, culture, food and nationality was catered for.

- Children were observed in circle time, tabletop activities, outdoor play, artwork for Mother's day and St Patricks day.
- The theme of the week was 'Mother's Day' and children made cards to send home. The Montessori children were colouring in St Patricks Day shamrocks.

### 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

(2)(a) There was 1 first aid box with the content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the service office.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) While it is acknowledged that the service had staff trained in first aid, the service provided no evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service and on the roster.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

Adults are enrolled in first aid responder training in April and we will ensure that someone trained in first aid responder is rostered at all times during the operation of the service.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of enrolment in first aid responder was submitted.

### Summary Comment

While it is acknowledged that the service is training two staff in first aid responder training, this remains non-compliant as evidence that this training has been completed has not been submitted.

### 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 monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 6th of March 2024.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 9<sup>th</sup> of January 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 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that all children were appropriately supervised, when attending the service. On the day of inspection, constant supervision by both sight and sound occurred to ensure children's safety. The adults were observed supervising children in the outdoor play areas, at toileting, in the playroom and at sleep time on stackable beds and in the designated sleep room.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The service had full day care insurance for up to 61 preschool children and was valid until the 27/03/2024.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) *A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*

*(b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a)(b)(c)

The service's complaints policy outlined:

- The procedure to be followed by a person making a complaint in relation to the service.
- The way a complaint shall be dealt with.
- The procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the way it is being dealt with.

(2) (a)(b)

- No written complaints were made in respect of the preschool service.
- The service's policy requirement to retain records in writing of complaints made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service.
- The procedure to ensure that complaints is duly dealt with.

(3)(a)(b)

The manager and the service policy detailed that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) includes:

- The nature of the complaint and the way the complaint was dealt with, and how the record will be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

(4)

The service policy specifies that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of two years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.