

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2024CC011		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Respond Early Years Service, Millpark		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Millpark, Redforge Road, Blackpool, Co Cork		
<b>Eircode:</b>	T23 RK1C		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa O'Rourke		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/04/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM 9
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast		
<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>	N/A		

### Description of service

Respond Early Years Service, Millpark was recently registered as a part time service, that offers care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. Daily hours of operation are from 9.00am to 2.00pm. This includes a sessional service, from 9.00am to 12.00pm.

The premises is situated in a residential area of Blackpool, on the north side of Cork city. It is provided from the ground floor of a two-storey building and consists of one operational care room. Children's sanitary facilities and a kitchen are located adjoining the care room, while staff sanitary facilities and an office are located adjacent to the care room. Children have the use of an outdoor play space, which is directly accessible from the main care room.

### Staffing

Four adults are attached to the early years service, two of whom are involved in the day-to-day care of the children. The registered provider and the regional manager are not based at the setting. However, the regional manager can provide cover as needed. Each of the three adults who work directly with the children holds a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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/ 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy 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 registered provider had assigned a person in charge to oversee the operation of the early years service, along with a named deputy. The roles of both adults were identified in writing.
- (b) Both the person in charge and the deputy were available for the duration of the announced inspection. Review of the staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was on site during operational hours.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults attached to the early years service were assessed and the following was deemed satisfactory:
- (a) Of the eight required written and validated references, seven had been obtained from past employers.
- (b) One of the required written and validated references on file was from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable. Review of the curricula vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.
- (4) Copies of completed certificates in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications were available on file in respect of the three adults, who were involved in the direct care of the children.

### 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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.
- (2) The requirements of the regulation in relation to the minimum ratio of adults to children, were adhered to. During the morning, there were 2 adults working directly with 10 children, who were aged 2 to 3 ½ years. In the afternoon, nine of these children remained for part time care and there were two adults on duty.
- (8)
- (a) There were at least two adults available on the premises throughout the duration of the inspection and at all times, in accordance with the staff roster.

### 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)

##### Basic needs:

- The mid-morning snack was accommodated at 10.30am. During this meal break, staff members sat with and chatted to the children. This helped to create a relaxed, unhurried environment, as the children enjoyed their food. Suitable crockery was also supplied.
- Reusable water bottles, which belonged to the children, were stored on a low-level shelf, where they could be easily seen and retrieved by the children, as needed, throughout the day.
- The inspector was advised that children who required nappy changing were attended to at designated intervals and as the need arose. Toilet trained children were observed to independently access the adjoining sanitary facility.
- Any child who wished to rest or relax could avail of the spacious cosy corner, as needed. During discussion, the person in charge advised that the children who required sleep typically availed of the scheduled rest period, in the afternoon. It was also confirmed that a child would be accommodated to sleep earlier in the day, if they displayed signs of tiredness.
- The children's hygiene was attended to regularly throughout the inspection and appropriate support was ensured. For example, children were supervised while washing their hands and were supported to clean their noses.
- The generously sized care room facilitated the free movement of children, as they initiated their chosen activities and explored materials. Active and exploratory play in the outdoor play environment, were also accommodated.
- As the weather was warm, staff members applied sunscreen to the children, before going outside.

### Supporting relationships:

- The adults were observed to be kind, patient and attentive in their interactions with the children. Children’s participation and interests were readily acknowledged throughout the morning. As a result, an active and engaging atmosphere was evident, as the children played and explored in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Children were supported to prepare for transitions within the daily routine. For example, verbal reminders were provided in the lead up to tidy up time and children were regularly informed in relation to upcoming activities.
- When minor disputes arose among children, staff members were observed to intervene in a calm manner, which prevented such incidents from escalating.
- The person in charge informed the inspector that a digital application was frequently used to engage with parents. This allowed parents to view information regarding their children’s activities of daily living and to receive photographs of various curriculum activities. In addition, phone calls, text messages, face to face discussion and email were incorporated. It was also noted that there was a dedicated parents information display, in the main entrance area.
- During conversation with the person in charge, the inspector was advised that informal staff meetings took place outside of operational hours and that formal staff supervision was facilitated regularly.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- Within the care room, a sufficient quantity of suitably sized tables and chairs was available for the children’s use.
- The positioning of play resources allowed for children’s ease of access to materials, with such items displayed on low-level shelving units.
- The indoor environment was divided into clearly defined interest areas, where play materials were grouped together, according to their use. For example, the home area was equipped with wooden kitchen units, play food, utensils, dress up clothes and a generous supply of dolls. Various sized building blocks, play tools, hand held vehicles and a car garage, were accessible in the construction area. The toy area was also suitably resourced, and art and craft materials were available for use.

- Outdoors, the children were observed using ride on toys, exploring with sand and water and playing with the wooden kitchen. Other equipment included wall mounted mirrors and blackboards, building blocks, balls and a balance beam. A sheltered area was available for all weather play.
- All examined equipment and materials were found to be in good working order.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- Snacks were supplied by the children’s parents or guardians. The range of foods available for the mid-morning meal break included sandwiches, crackers, yogurts and a variety of fruit, with water or milk to drink.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children had any food allergies or intolerances. As mealtimes were not catered by the service, dietary requirements were managed by the children’s parents or caregivers, through the provision of appropriate snacks. However, should any food based activities be facilitated at the setting, the person in charge stated that ingredient labels would be checked, to ensure that dietary requirements would be accommodated.
- During conversation, the person in charge confirmed that if any of the children became hungry outside of the designated mealtimes, they could choose a snack from their lunchbox. An additional supply of snacks was also maintained in the kitchen.

### 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:

- Entry to the service was via two separate doors, with the inner door secured by an electronic keypad. This safety mechanism reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access. Exit via the care room door was also controlled electronically, which minimised the risk of a child exiting unsupervised.
- Other interior doors, such as the door to the kitchen, the office and to the outdoor play space were also controlled by electronic keypads.
- A secure enclosure, which combined high-level block walls and a gate, was provided in the outdoor play area.
- Tension devices were in place to anchor blind cords.
- Low-level glass panels were fitted with visibility strips.
- There were no electrical cables or flexes within the children's reach.
- Cleaning agents and first aid supplies were stored at a height that was inaccessible to children.
- Firefighting equipment was secured.

##### Infection control:

- Handwashing practice was supported through the availability of warm running water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins, at each of the wash hand basins.
- It was observed that the children washed their hands after messy play, before snack time and after having their nappies changed. A staff member was noted to wash her hands after assisting a child to clean their nose.
- Perishable foods such as yogurts and milk were refrigerated, which reduced the risk of food spoilage.
- Children's coats were stored on individually labelled wall hooks, above floor level.
- The following practices, which were observed during a nappy changing procedure, were in keeping with the nappy changing procedure displayed at the service and helped to reduce the risk of cross infection:
  - the adult wore a single use apron and gloves, which were removed once the nappy change was completed
  - the changing area was sanitised after the child had been changed

- both the adult and the child washed their hands after the nappy change.
- Individual drawer storage was used for the children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams.
- The care room, adjoining sanitary facilities, kitchen and the office appeared clean and well maintained. For each area within the service, cleaning schedules and corresponding cleaning records were available for review.
- The care room was adequately ventilated. Open windows allowed for the circulation of fresh air.

#### **Administration of medication:**

- The administration of medication to a child was not observed.
- The medication that may be required for one of the children was stored out of children's reach and was found to be in-date.

#### **Fire safety:**

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.
- Fire exits were illuminated and maintained free from obstruction.

#### **Outing:**

- It was stated by the person in charge that outings were not undertaken.