

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2024DL003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Child Led		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Tawnalary, Donegal, Co. Donegal		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F94 A895		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sharon Graham Porter		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	28/11/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	29	PM 24
<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>	L Mc Glynn		
<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

This privately owned and operated preschool service is located on the outskirts of Donegal Town adjacent to another large full day care operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide full day care to children aged 1-6 years and operates between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm.

The premises consists of two detached buildings, each one equipped with a care room, sanitary accommodation and storage facilities. One of the buildings, the little wonderers, cares for younger children aged 1-2 years and has a designated sleep room. The second building, curious minds, cares for older preschool children aged 2-5 years.

### Staffing

There were 14 staff members employed to work in the service. This included staff employed to work with children on a daily basis, relief staff and building maintenance staff.

### 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 and health, welfare and development of child. 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, 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*
- (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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person to deputise in the event of their absence.
  - (b) The designated person or named deputy were rostered to be present at all times during the operation of the service.
  - (c) Information on the service's management structure was provided during the inspection identifying the lines of authority, roles and responsibilities of employees.

(2)

At the time of inspection, there were 14 staff members working in the service. With reference to the above listed elements of Regulation 9, recruitment records of the 14 staff members were reviewed and the following was available:

- (a) (b) Written and validated references were on file for 13 staff members from a past employer or in cases where there were no past employers, a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was on file for two staff members who required it.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for 13 staff members who required it.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b) There was no reference on file from their most recent past employer for one staff member. It is acknowledged that there were two validated references on file for the staff member, however the requirement for one of these to be from the most recent past employer was not met.

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

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

(2) (a) (b) The reference was obtained. We have a two-step check list in place. The first is used at interview stage and the second checklist is once a successful interview candidate has been offered and accepted employment.

We tick the check list once all relevant documents are checked and received, and copies taken if required. The two step process of checking documentation for staff means no documentation can be missed from interview stage to employment. A staff member will only commence their working role when all required documentation and ID has been received.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the service checklist and staff reference was submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the information submitted. The non-compliance identified under regulation 9 (2) has been addressed.

## 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) There was an adequate number of adults caring for the children throughout the inspection.

(2) When assessed on the morning of inspection, the following was observed.

In the Little Wonderers room there were three adults caring for 11 children aged 1-2 years.

In the Curious Minds room, three adults cared for 18 children aged 2-5 years.

In the afternoon, there were nine children in the little wonderers room being cared for by three adults and 15 children in the curious minds room with three adults.

### 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)

All meals and snacks provided to children were delivered from the adjacent service also operated by the registered provider with a three-week menu plan in operation. Staff informed the inspector that throughout the day, children were served breakfast, a mid-morning snack, a main meal and an afternoon snack. The children were observed eating the mid-morning snack of toast and fruit segments and the main hot meal which was service at 12.00 midday. Individual drinking bottles were provided for each child set up at a drink station on a low-level. The children helped themselves to their drinks when thirsty promoting their independence. At mealtimes the children sat in groups at tables with staff who chatted to them while supervising them and helping them when needed.

The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were supported to do so. Children were observed to access the toilet independently and staff members remained close by to provide assistance if required. Children were given gentle reminders about hand hygiene before returning to play. Younger children had their nappies changed in a timely manner and in response to their individual needs. The staff spoke to the children while changing their nappy involving them in the process.

Staff members arranged appropriate activities throughout the day to meet the learning needs of the children attending. Outdoor play was incorporated into the daily routine that was displayed on the walls of the playrooms. A pictorial display of the daily routine in the curious minds room provided a visual cue for children of the transitions throughout the day which in turn were managed effectively. Staff informed the inspector that a parent of one of the children had provided the images along with flash cards for each staff member which could be worn on a lanyard and readily used. Children responded well to the use of the flash cards and appeared comfortable with the routine and structure of the day. Children attending the curious minds room were observed running around the large outdoor area playing team games with staff members. When playing inside in both rooms, the children moved around freely without restriction. There was a sleep room off the

little wonderers room to facilitate rest for and a small couch was available to the children in the curious minds room.

Staff were warm in their approaches and interactions with the children and showed familiarity with their individual interests. Staff members were observed to regularly engage in one-to-one interaction at children's level, sitting near children and providing comfort and support when upset.

Children in both care rooms had access to art and craft materials and a large sand pit in the little wonderers room provided an additional sensory play opportunity. Imaginary play was supported with construction materials, farm toys, doll and baby care items. Reading areas in both rooms provided for children's developing literacy skills and staff were observed reading to children at their request throughout the day. Jigsaws, shape sorters and bricks were available to support children's fine motor development and the large outdoor areas directly accessible from both rooms provided opportunities for gross motor development.

There was evidence of curriculum planning around themes and topics of interest with wall displays of children's artwork in the rooms mirroring the current theme. Staff informed the inspector that a parent had joined in one of the sessions in the curious minds room to discuss the traditions around thanksgiving and a range of artwork completed by the children during the session was visible in the room. A key worker system was in operation in the rooms with evidence of observations being carried out on children's interests with these being included in the plan for the coming week.