

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2024LK004
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stepping Stones Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St Mary's Boys School Church Street Abbeyfeale Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94DH56
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Georgina Lyons
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/10/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Ryan R Phillips
<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).

### Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

### Description of service

This private sessional service was established in September 2024. It operates a morning session from 09:30hrs – 12:30hrs Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service offers a play-based curriculum from a classroom in the national school where the children have access to a pre-school room, sanitary accommodation and facilities for outdoor play.

### Staffing

The registered provider and the second staff member both hold a major award in early childhood care and education at level 6 and level 7. The staff had engaged in on-going professional development including first aid training.

### 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 9,11 and 19.

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, 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 registered provider was the person in charge and a named person to deputise as required was available.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived and was documented on the staff roster.

The following documents were available on file for all staff.

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff and were dated within the last three years.

(d) There were no staff members who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months therefore police vetting was not required.

(4) The staff working directly with the children attending the service held awards in early childhood care and education at levels 6 and 7 on the national qualifications framework.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

The minimum adult/child ratio of 1:11 was maintained as there were 10 children in attendance being supervised by 2 staff.

An additional adult was present who was currently studying for a level 5 qualification.

### 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 children brought their own packed lunches in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. Food observed on the day of the inspection included: sandwiches, yogurts, a selection of fruit and drinks of water. Children sat at low tables and had their lunch in an environment that promoted social interaction with their peers and the adults and was unhurried.

The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap. Staff were observed to clean the tables before snacks were eaten.

Children were allowed to move freely indoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. A designated rest/quiet area was available in the room should a child need to rest and have some quiet time.

There was a plentiful supply of play props available to support imaginative and creative play in the defined interest areas in the kitchen/home corner, construction area, dress up area, rest area, art/craft area and jigsaw section.

Staff were observed to sit at the tables at the child's eye level and supported them to complete activities they had chosen.

The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The staff modelled positive behaviour for the children and they were praised for their good behaviour. Interactions with the children were positive and caring.

##### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The room was equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials. Children were observed to choose play materials, complete an activity independently and replace the equipment to its designated place on the shelving.

An adult sized couch was available in the room where children could rest/ relax in and have some quiet time if they choose to opt out of an activity. Good supplies of books were available which helped support language development.

Children were observed colouring pictures and drawing which supported mark making activities. The curriculum theme over the next few weeks will involve activities related to halloween.

The walls of the rooms were decorated with posters and the children's artwork. Facilities were available for outdoor play which were secure and contained a section of all-weather surface.

Children played outdoors where there were three sand boxes with play props to support messy play. Children were observed using the ride on bikes, seesaw, art easel and blowing bubbles.

A section of the outside area was roofed which allowed the group play outdoors in all weather conditions.