

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025WD001
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Name of Service:	Passage East Childcare Initiative
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Address of Service:	Community Centre, The Quay, Passage East, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 FD85
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Millea
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Service type:	Full Day, Temporary
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Date of Inspection:	22/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	3
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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
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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Passage East Childcare Initiative is a community-based service located in the village of Passage East in Co Waterford. The service offers a full day care service for children aged 2 to 3 years old on a temporary basis from the local community centre while building works are completed on the existing early years service located nearby. The service operates from 08:00 to 17:30, with reduced hours 2 days per week closing at 16:30. The premises is a room within a community building. There is sanitary accommodation and an outdoor play area allocated for use by the early years service. The service has sole use of the room as an early years service.

Staffing

The service currently employs two full time and one part time early years staff members. The registered provider does not work directly in the 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 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– Management and Recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11– Staffing levels, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, and 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8 – Notification of change of circumstance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 10 and 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the toddler room.

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

This inspection was triggered on foot of information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

An Immediate Action notice was issued to the registered provider on 22 January 2026 in relation to access to the service on inspection. A response was received from the registered provider on 23 January 2026 which addressed the non-compliance. Further information can be found under Regulation 23 – General Safety below.

A referral was made to the Services Operating Outside of Registration department of the Early Years Inspectorate, arising from non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 below.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(2) A registered provider of a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 7 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On review of attendance records and discussion with staff members it was identified that the service was operating outside of their current registration. The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 11 children aged 2 to 3 years old at any one time.

Attendance records for the week Monday 12th January to Friday 16th January 2026 documented between 12 and 13 children in attendance daily. Records available for Monday 19th January and Wednesday 21st January 2026, showed that 12 children were recorded in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service reviewed their register and after consulting parents three children were moved from the toddler room to preschool building in the main service in Crooke. This now allows the two children settling in to be included in our attendance and will leave one space available should we need it. We are ensuring that room does not exceed 11 children at any given time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Child attendance register.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 8 has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection, and a named person was available to deputise as required.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the three staff members employed by the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.
- (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) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.
- (4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (7)(a) Staff members confirmed they had read policies and procedures in line with the service's training policy. All staff members are trained in Children first.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: policy on managing behaviour, policy on accidents and incidents, policy on infection control, policy on staff absences, policy on recruitment and policy on staff training. These policies and procedures were appropriate and specific to the setting.

Non-Compliance Information

On review of the service policies and procedures the inspector observed that some policies were inadequate to inform staff on best practice as follows:

1. Safe Sleep: The policy stated that a "staff member may remain in the room where children are sleeping. If there is no staff member in the room, the staff have visibility of the children through a viewing panel. Intermittent supervision is not sufficient to safeguard children sleeping on floor beds. It is acknowledged that in practice staff remained in the room with sleeping children during the inspection.
2. Healthy Eating: The policy did not state a requirement for children attending the service for Full Day Care over five hours to have a hot meal provided.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Safe Sleeping: A staff member will remain in the room when children are sleeping/resting. The staff member on duty will record in the Sleep Log all staff have been informed of their duties.
2. Healthy eating: We have notified parent and included requirements for children attending for Full Day Care over five hours must have a hot meal. We have also put this in our newsletter to all parents.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe sleep and healthy eating policies. Parents newsletter.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately 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.

(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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 11 children with 3 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection. The staff roster and attendance logs reflected the staff members present and detailed sufficient staff cover to maintain ratio during staff breaks.

(2) The staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- At 11:00 there were 11 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- At 12:00 there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- At 13:50 there were 3 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

(8)(a) On review of staff attendance logs and observation on inspection, it was evidenced that two staff members were onsite at all times.

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-

(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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) All food and drink was supplied by parents. Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation about the food they were eating. The children were encouraged to feed themselves and were assisted as required. Children had free movement and choice of activities on the day and interactions between staff members and children were warm and intentional. Staff sat with children in small groups during activities such as play dough and during free play.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Sleep was scheduled in conjunction with parents; three of the five children present were placed to sleep at 12:00. The room was sufficiently dark and quiet with relaxing music playing to promote a restful sleep. Low-level floor beds were available to meet the sleep needs of children. Children who were awake while others were sleeping in the same room, were accommodated with one-on-one time with staff members, reading stories, playing games and colouring.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(2)(3) The early years service had an appropriate behaviour management policy in place. Behaviour management practices observed on the day of inspection were appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. Staff members promoted sharing and turn taking, they spoke with children at their level and supported children to regulate their emotions. In discussion with staff, ongoing incidents of challenging behaviour are monitored and plans put in place if required.

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:

- All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.
- Three accident and incident records were available from commencement of the service in November 2025 to January 2026. These records were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed.
- All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children.
- All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them.

Infection Control:

- Three low-level beds were spaced the required 50cm apart.
- The room was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff.
- There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing.
- Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children.

Safe Sleep:

- A staff member remained in the room while children were sleeping on low level beds.
- A cellular blanket was placed over each child while sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

General Safety:

1. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the service on the day of inspection as on the inspector's arrival, the entrance door to the classroom was unlocked and the inspector was able to gain unauthorised access to the room. It was observed on several occasions throughout the day that the door was unlocked.

Infection Control:

2. Perishable foods were stored in children's bags, stored at floor level in the classroom. They remained in bags for the duration of the inspection and on discussion with staff members, this was the practice daily in the service. This is contrary to the service policy.
3. Nappy changing practices observed were at variance with the services nappy changing and infection control policy. The following were observed:
 - Staff and children's hands were not washed after nappy changing.
 - Plastic gloves and apron worn by staff were not changed between individual children and the nappy changing mat was not cleaned.
4. There was no bed sheet provided for children to sleep upon, children were observed to be placed directly on the plastic surface of the low-level beds.

Safe Sleep:

5. While staff members were observed to complete sleep checks, the child's position, colour, breathing and room temperature were only recorded when the child initially went to sleep. No further checks were documented.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. We have ensured that the door is locked at all times also we have put a sign to alert staff of their obligation to secure the room. All policies and procedures will be implemented; the service will monitor staff and staff habits on a regular basis.

Infection Control:

2. Perishable foods are removed from children's bags on arrival every morning and are now stored in the larger fridge in the kitchenette. All policies and procedures will be implemented; the service will monitor staff and staff habits on a regular basis.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

3. Staff and children's hands are being washed after every nappy change. Plastic gloves and aprons worn by staff are now changed and disposed of after every nappy change. The changing mat is cleaned after every nappy change also. All policies and procedures will be implemented; the service will monitor staff and staff habits on a regular basis.
4. We have purchased new bed sheets and these are now in use. All policies and procedures will be implemented; the service will monitor staff and staff habits on a regular basis.

Safe Sleep:

5. Policy has been drawn up to include recommended changes and will be adhered to at all times. All policies and procedures will be implemented; the service will monitor staff and staff habits on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

No evidence

Infection Control:

Confirmation of purchase of bed linen. Nappy changing logs

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed. Implementation will be reviewed on next inspection.