

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY213
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Name of Service:	Enable Ireland Disability Services
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Address of Service:	Enable Ireland Children's Services, Galway Services, Seamus Quirke Road, Newcastle, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 E8P4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Higgins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Nic Dhonnacha
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).

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Description of service

Rainbow is a pre-school for children aged 2-6 years with complex physical and sensory disabilities requiring additional supports in an inclusive environment where each child is valued and supported to reach their full potential during their pre-school years. It is part of Enable Ireland, the lead agency for Children's Disability Network Team 5 in Galway City West. The pre-school aims to provide an individualised programme to each child who may benefit from additional supports in their early development. Emphasis is primarily on areas such as communication, social development, cognitive development, gross and fine motor skills, independence and self-help, including play. Children may receive therapy from the team both within the pre-school and on an individual basis by therapists. Hydrotherapy sessions are provided in the pool on a weekly basis. The preschool operates from a single room in the Enable Ireland Galway building on the University Hospital grounds Monday to Friday between 10.00 and 13.00 hours. The preschool is equipped with ceiling track hoists and adaptive equipment and materials. Additionally, the children have the use of a sensory room on the premises. There is a designated outdoor play area to the rear of the premises with direct access from the preschool playroom.

Staffing

The registered provider is the manager and has an office on the premises, but does not work in the service on a daily basis. There is a designated person in charge and a named deputy person in charge. Four staff and one bus escort/student were present on the day of inspection.

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

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This inspection was unannounced 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 Record in Relation to Pre-School Service.

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, deputy 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-

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- (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.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (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 manager and there was a designated person in charge. There is a named deputy person in charge who was available as required.
- (b) The registered provider and deputy person in charge were available throughout the inspection.
- (c) There was evidence of a clear management structure in the preschool service outlining the roles and responsibilities of each staff member.
- (2) Twelve staff files were available in respect of the registered provider, designated person in charge, deputy person in charge, 6 childcare workers, 1 bus escort, a person on a community employment scheme who is a student over the age of 18 years and additionally provides support as a bus escort and a nurse who works onsite. The findings included the following:
- (2)(a) Twenty-one references were sourced from past employers and validated.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, three references were obtained from a source other than a past employer and validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 12 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

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- (d) International police vetting was required for four members of staff who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult. The service provided the relevant documentation that was required.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any adults being appointed and having access to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (4) The staff working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

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 pre-school children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of child attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were seven pre-school children aged between three and six years of age.

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There were 4 childcare staff and a person on a community employment scheme (who was a student on a childcare course) over the age of 18 years. In addition, the registered provider assisted with the administration part of the inspection.

(8)(c) The preschool was not operated single handedly; a minimum of two staff worked on the premises during the hours of operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The position and qualification of each staff member was maintained and kept on file in the service.
- (g) A hard back folder was available with the policies, procedures and statements of the service.
- (h) Details of children's attendance was accurately maintained.
- (i) A staff roster was available onsite.
- (j) Records were available of medication administration forms with parental consent and staff signatures recorded. A sample of five forms were reviewed.
- (k) Details of accidents and incidents were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child. A sample of 10 forms were reviewed.

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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.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

(1)(a)

- The parents/guardians provided the children's snacks/meals and each child had a sippy cup filled with water they could access throughout the session. Healthy eating was promoted by the service. The children could access their snacks at any point from the service fridge and eat when they were hungry. A rolling snack time system was in operation in the service.
- The children had their snack/meal in the indoor environment while using this time as an opportunity to enhance social interactions with the children. The staff and children sat together while eating. The snack observed was healthy, nutritious and varied- some children had sandwiches with ham or cheese, wraps, boiled eggs, avocado, yogurts and chopped fruit.
- A child was fed via a gastric tube and the staff were aware of her individual care plan and the child's needs and requirements during the sessional service.
- The children had the use of the sanitary area indoors and assistance was provided if requested. The children who wore a nappy were changed regularly whilst maintaining their privacy and dignity at all times.
- A rest area was available in the playroom with a couch, cushions and bean bags adjacent to the reading area.
- The children had the freedom to play indoors or outdoors throughout the session, while staff supervised the children in both areas throughout the morning session. The children had direct access from their playroom to the outdoor play area.
- The children were observed playing with the activity centre, playing with sand in the mud kitchen and some children kicked ball and chased each other in the play area.

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Supporting Relationships.

- The staff continuously communicated with the children on the day of inspection, provided prompts when necessary and offered reassurance as required. They were provided with sensory breaks as required where the children and staff went to a separate sensory room for a short period to assist the children who may require assistance with sensory regulation.
- The children were allowed to choose their own activities in the outdoor play area and could change their activities if they wished. They had access to tricycles, sand and mud kitchen, a playhouse, tyres, slides, planting boxes and black boards.
- The majority of the children availed of the Enable Ireland transport bus with escorts to supervise the journey and safe transport to the preschool and home. When a parent came to the service to collect their child the key worker discussed the child's day and any significant issues that may have arisen during the session.
- Each child had a scrapbook "My Journal" to capture their artwork, ideas and themes collated together and observations by the staff included. Each scrapbook was filled over the course of the year and was presented to each parent/guardian at the end of the school year. The theme was Summertime including the child's interests.
- The indoor environment had many visual learning aids- educational posters, prompts, photographs and artwork carried out by the children and child friendly posters.
- The children were observed playing in various areas of the preschool playroom, playing with construction materials, building blocks, listening to music, while others were observed looking at books. Additionally, the staff and children took part in singing and dancing together as a group.

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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:

- The main entrance to the preschool was appropriately secured and the outdoor play area had a secure system in place.
- The children's arrival and departure to the service was recorded on the child attendance roll book at the entrance door.
- The materials and play equipment in the playroom were maintained in good condition.
- The indoor playroom temperature was recorded within normal limits at 18.3°C.
- All cleaning agents were inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- There was a fridge in the playroom for the safe storage of perishable items from the children's lunch boxes.
- The sanitary area was appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and a foot pedal operated bin was available.
- The sanitary area had two low level toilets and wash hand basins with ample space for mobility chairs or the use of adaptive equipment/manual handling lifting and safe manoeuvring devices. In addition, there was a wash hand basin in the preschool playroom.
- There was a designated nappy changing area with curtains to maintain the dignity and privacy of the children and a high-low electric changing unit. A foot pedal operated airtight lidded bin was available for the safe disposal of nappies. Liquid soap and paper hand towels were readily available for hand washing.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtimes. Tissues were widely available throughout the preschool for use by the children or staff if required.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

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Safe Sleep:

- The children had access to a cosy rest corner with comfortable seating if they chose to take a break and have a rest throughout the morning session.
- One child who used a wheelchair could take a rest in a large cot type unit to stretch and relieve the pressure off their extremities in a safe environment whilst being supervised at all times.
- A child was observed to take a rest in the cosy corner while a staff member sat and comforted the child as required.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit doors were free from obstruction.
- There were clear visual displays of the evacuation procedure and the steps to follow in the event of a fire.

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

- (1) Nine staff had up to date training in First Aid Responder (FAR) first aid course and an additional staff member was booked in to do the course before the end of June 2026. Evidence was available from the staff attendance record book to inform the inspector that at least one trained staff member was always available to the children during the hours of operation of the sessional service if required.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous area in the playroom.
- (b) The first aid box was available in the playroom for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.