

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH029
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Name of Service:	Cherryhill High-Scope Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Cherryhill, Mullaghey, Kells, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A82 K762
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patty Wilcox
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	11/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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

Cherryhill High-Scope Pre-School was established in September 1989. The service operates from 09:00hrs to 12:00 hours offering Sessional Care and ECCE Scheme to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service can accommodate a maximum of 22 pre-school children.

Staffing

The registered provider and one staff member are employed 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/ 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

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.

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
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Two files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

(a)& (b) Four validated written references were available for the staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff members.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(4) The staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 6 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were two adults working directly with children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct. Two staff members were present with 5 pre-school children (aged between 4 years and 5 years).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Basic Needs of the Children:

The registered provider and staff member ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together, playing in the outdoor area and story time with the staff. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were observed putting on their own coats and hats before they went to the outdoor area. During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. Staff were observed playing with the children in the outdoor area. Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. For example, in the outdoor area staff were observed playing and initiating games with the children who were on ride on toys provided by the service. The parents and guardians supplied their children with lunches and drink requirements whilst attending the service. This was a sociable, unhurried time with the children sitting with their friends around adjoined tables to foster a sense of community. The adults sat with the children whilst they ate and assisted with opening cartons and disposing of packaging, as required. Toileting was gently supervised by staff members and children encouraged to independently wash hands, flush toilets and discard of paper towels. A rest area was available within the playroom for the children to opt out of scheduled activities if they so wished.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

The staff members were observed to work well as a team with smooth transitions between activities. They were found to be patient, friendly and engaging with the children, both on a one-to-one basis and individually when facilitating toileting and organising the lunch break. Low tones and good eye contact was maintained, and the children were relaxed, happy and familiar with the staff.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. Areas developed included a sand table, farm equipment, sheds animals and machinery, table top activities, jigsaws, puzzles and threading, dress up clothes, large home corner, blocks, cars and trucks. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area. There was an outdoor kitchen, picnic tables, small slide, and other equipment to support imaginative play. There were ride-on toys provided to facilitate gross motor play. There was a concrete surface for the children to play on the ride on toys, and a large area which was covered in natural grass for the enjoyment of all the children.

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:

- Both the secured fencing and secured main door restricted the children from leaving the service unsupervised. Unauthorised access was also restricted.
- Internal doors were suitably secured.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Staff members personal belongings were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

The service appeared to be clean and in good repair on the day of inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years rooms and toilet areas.
- There were fridges available in the service to store the food which was provided by the parents.
- All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, soap, and foot operated pedal bins.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- 1)(a) A written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service. the last recorded fire drill was 13th January 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 7th March 2024 and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced 7th March 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.