

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2018CC512 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Eager Einstein's |
|-------------------------|------------------|

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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Preschool Montessori C/O Whitegate National School, Whitegate, Midleton,<br>Co Cork |
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|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | P25 A062 |
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|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Ailbhe Young |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Part Time |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 25/05/2026 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 16 | PM | 10 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health<br>Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | D Prendergast                                                                                             |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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

Eager Einsteins Preschool Montessori was established in 2018. It is a part time setting, that also accommodates children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The ECCE sessional service operates from 9.00am to 12.00pm and part time hours are from 9.00am to 2.00pm. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years.

Situated in a rural village in east Cork, the early years service is provided from a classroom within Whitegate National School. Adjacent sanitary facilities are available and the children have access to an enclosed outdoor play space, on the school grounds.

### Staffing

The service employs two adults, both of whom work directly with the children. This includes the registered provider. Both adults were present on the day of the 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

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

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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 member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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### 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 designated person in charge of operating the early years service and a named deputy had also been appointed, to deputise in her absence.

**(b)**

The registered provider and the deputy were present throughout the inspection process. Examination of the staff attendance records indicated that both the person in charge and the deputy were on duty during the hours of operation.

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### (2) (a) (b) (d) & (4)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection on 28 November 2023. Therefore, parts (2) (a) (b) (d) and (4) were not assessed, as these were reviewed at the time of the previous inspection. However, Garda vetting for one staff member, whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal, was requested for review.

### (c)

Garda vetting in respect of one adult had been renewed. This was in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

## 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

The following policies were assessed and deemed to meet the necessary requirements:

- Statement of purpose and function
- Policy on accidents and incidents
- Policy on outdoor play
- Supervision of staff policy.

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### 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) At all times during the period of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.
- (2) The adult child ratio was correct on the day of the unannounced inspection. The room was in operation as follows:
- During the morning, there were 16 children, aged 2 years and 11 months to 5 years in attendance and 2 adults were working directly with these children.
  - Ten of these children remained at the setting for part time care and were under the direct care and supervision of 2 adults.
- (8)
- (a) Review of the staff attendance records and observation on the day of inspection demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

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### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) Ten of the 18 child registration records were sampled. Each of the 10 records were assessed in relation to parts
- (a) to (i) above and were deemed to meet the requirements.

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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, and*

#### Compliance Information

##### (1)(a)

##### Basic needs:

- The mid-morning snack was accommodated at 10.40am. This was observed to be a relaxed, social occasion, as the children sat and chatted together and were afforded plenty of time to eat and drink.
- Reusable water bottles, which belonged to the children, were stored on top of a low-level shelf, where they could be easily seen and retrieved by the children, as needed, throughout the day.
- The children were supervised when accessing the sanitary facilities, with staff members noted to provide appropriate assistance and gentle reminders, as required.
- Tissues were available within the classroom, which supported children to carry out self-care and personal hygiene tasks. A staff member was also observed to encourage children to look in the mirror when cleaning their faces, after snack time.
- The available space in the classroom facilitated the free movement of children, as they initiated their chosen activities and explored various materials. Active play in the outdoor area was also accommodated during the morning. For example, the children were observed using seesaws, hula hoops, wheelbarrows and a slide.

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### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Within the classroom, the children had easy access to a designated cosy area, where they could take time to rest and relax as needed during the day. This consisted of a vinyl sofa, a fold out mat and cushions, which were positioned next to a selection of books. A stackable bed and linen were held in storage, to accommodate any child who may require sleep while in attendance.

### 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 door to the building was keypad operated. A second interior door, which provided direct access to the early years service was also keypad operated, with a doorbell in place for parents and visitors. These safety precautions curtailed the risk of unauthorised access and also reduced the risk of a child exiting the premises unsupervised.
- In the outdoor play space, a secure enclosure was created through high-level fencing and an entrance/exit gate.
- When walking from the main building to the outdoor play area, the children were instructed to hold onto a walking rope and were closely supervised by the adults.
- Child access to the staff toilet facility and to the storage room, was prevented through ensuring that the door keys to these areas were stored on wall hooks, at adult height.
- High level shelf storage was provided for cleaning agents.
- The windows in the classroom were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.

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### Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were easily accessible to the children, with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels available at their eye level. The children were noted to wash their hands after using the sanitary facilities, after outdoor play and before eating.
- The children's perishable snacks were observed to be refrigerated, which ensured that such snacks were maintained within the recommended temperature range of 0°C to 5°C.
- Children's personal belongings were hung on individually labelled wall hooks and a trolley was in use to store their bags.
- Windows in the classroom and sanitary facilities remained open throughout the inspection, which facilitated adequate ventilation.

### Fire safety:

- Firefighting equipment was secured.
- Fire exits were observed to be free from any obstructions.

## 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) Review of the First Aid Response (FAR) certificates on file, in conjunction with the staff attendance records, demonstrated that an adult with current FAR training was available to the children at all times, during the service's hours of operation. Both adults had completed this training.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was stored in an area that was easily accessible by adults, while out of reach of children.
  - (b) The first aid box was available at all times, for use as needed.