

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH086
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Shapes and Sizes
-------------------------	------------------

Address of Service:	57 Mill St., Dundalk, Co. Louth
----------------------------	---------------------------------

Eircode:	A91 E803
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara Kelly
-------------------------------------	---------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	07/07/2026
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	11
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Shapes and Sizes has been registered as an Early Years' service since July 2002. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day care and education to pre-school children aged 1-6 years. The service operates from 8am - 6pm Monday –Friday and caters for a maximum of 44 preschool children.

The service operates from a 2 storey purposely renovated building in a residential area of Dundalk, Co. Louth. The premises consist of 4 care rooms namely; The Toddler Room and Playgroup Room on the ground floor and The Preschool and Montessori Rooms on the 1st floor. Ancillary accommodation includes sanitary areas, a kitchen and dining area, staff room and storage. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 10 employed staff in the service which included the following:

- The registered provider who attends the service intermittently.
- 9 childcare staff who work directly with the preschool children and this includes the designated person in charge.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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.

(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 in their absence.

(b) The person in charge and deputy person were both on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

(2) Following a discussion with the person in charge and a review of the staff rosters, it was confirmed to the inspector that there are currently 10 members of staff employed in the service, including the registered provider. No new members of staff have been employed in the service since the last routine inspection that was carried out on 24/10/2024.

(a) & (b) The staff files for the registered provider and 9 existing members of staff were reviewed on the previous inspection and were found to meet regulatory compliance.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures for the registered provider and 9 existing staff members who were present in the service were presented for inspection and reviewed. The documents reviewed demonstrated that the registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting documents that were required for 3 staff members were previously reviewed and met regulatory compliance at this time.
- (4) Documentary evidence previously reviewed for the registered provider and 9 staff members employed to work directly with children met regulatory compliance.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (2) On the day of inspection there were 3 preschool rooms in operation namely The Toddler Room, The Playgroup Room and The Summer Camp Room.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspector arrived unannounced to the service;
- **The Toddler Room**
- There were 5 preschool children aged 2-3 years present with 1 member of staff.
- **The Playgroup Room**

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

There were 7 preschool children aged 3-4 years present with 1 member of staff.

- **The Summer camp Room (Preschool Room)**

There were 7 preschool children aged 4-5 years present with 2 members of staff. 6 children attending the school aged service were also present in this care-room

The person in charge was also present in the service and provided assistance and relief in the care rooms as required. They were also observed to carry out catering duties.

The adult child ratios were correct.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records, the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(h) A written record of attendance was available for all children attending the service and included details of the children's arrival and departure times. The information also included the details of any child who moved care rooms during the day and what time they entered and left the room.

(i) A documented staff rota was available and included details of the arrival and departure times for all staff present on the day of inspection. It also provided information on the break times for staff.

(3) All documented records and staff files were available for inspection by the authorised officer.

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

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider facilitated each child's learning and development:

Basic Needs:

- The children had free movement in the care rooms. In the Playgroup Room the door to the outside area was left open so the children had the choice to move freely between the 2 areas.
- Independence with toileting was promoted and discrete supervision was provided as required by staff members. Reminders were given to carry out handwashing after toileting.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- Attention was given to personal care such as brushing and 'tying up' hair. The children were observed to independently access tissues and to wipe their own noses at the mirror in the care room.
- All morning and afternoon snacks were provided by the parents. The dinners which were also brought in from home were reheated by staff in the kitchen. All the children attending the service joined in the downstairs area and had lunch together in the eating area of the kitchen and Playgroup Room. Snack and mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and unrushed and the children were given as much time as they needed to finish their food. Staff were observed to engage in conversations with the children and assisted those where needed. Drinks and bottles were stored on a tray at low level and were accessible to the children as required.
- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff in all the rooms. The staff were observed to use positive supportive language for example in the Playgroup Room to encourage the children to tidy up after activities e.g. *"super tidying....well-done guys. Super strong girls.."* When the children had completed an art/ colouring activity the staff member asked *"..do you want to bring it home?"* and the children were observed to independently go to their bags in the hallway and place the completed artwork.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Some of the children were observed to independently access the soft area to rest and take a break from activities.

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)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in all the rooms, with soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest during the day.
- There was separate cot room in the service which is not currently in use for sleep purposes. The person in charge confirmed that the Toddler Room is converted to a sleep area if a child requires a sleep. The children aged less than 2 years had access to a standard cot and cot bed if it is required. All cots and mattresses reviewed were in good condition, fitted appropriately and met the required safety standards.
- A stackable day bed was available in the service for children aged over 2 years of age, should an older child require a rest or sleep.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The main entrance doors were secured upon the inspector's arrival. The entrance doors were controlled by a 'buzzer' locking system and remained locked while not in use, ensuring no unauthorised person could enter the building or no child could leave the building unsupervised.
- Designated emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Documentary evidence was available of recorded daily hot water temperatures. The information provided evidence that hot water temperatures was monitored three times daily to ensure that hot water does not exceed the required maximum safe hot water temperature of 43 °C.
- Televisions in the service are wall mounted and all cables are out of reach of the children.
- Although not used during the inspection the 3 highchairs available in the service were fitted with a safety harness.
- The children had sun cream re-applied and were encouraged to play 'indoors' for periods of time, keeping them safe from the 'hot midday sun' on the day of the inspection.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Infection Control:

- All perishable lunch and snack items were appropriately stored in the refrigerator.
- Tabletops were wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing throughout the service
- Hand washing was observed in the Toddler Room and Junior Preschool Room after messy play, before lunch and after nappy changing or toileting.
- There were individual lidded storage boxes for the storage of the children's soothers in the Toddler Room.
- Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the service had engaged the services of an external company to carry out regular 'pest control' checks on the premises. '

Safe Sleep:

- No child was observed to sleep during the inspection. The safe sleep observations record from 2 previous days (30/06/26 and 22/06/26) were reviewed and were found to detail the required observations carried out at ten-minute intervals.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

Infection Control:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

1. In the Toddler Room one staff member who carried out a nappy change child was observed to keep their used gloves on and proceeded to have multiple touch points including turning on the tap, lifting paper towel for the child to dry their hands and lifting the bin lid with the used gloves still in place. This is a cross-contamination risk.
2. This same staff member was observed to inappropriately dispose of the plastic apron and gloves used for nappy changing into a swing lidded bin, touching the bin lid with their hands. This is a cross-infection risk.

General Safety:

3. There were no restrictors present on the windows in the upstairs Summer Camp Room. It is acknowledged that the children were in the outdoor area or downstairs room during the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Staff member in a toddler room and all staff members were updated with nappy changing policy and discussed hand washing and gloves use in the setting. Manager will be daily checking and reminding staff to follow policy. Also, manager will be supervising staff member in the toddler room on a daily basis.
2. Bin in the changing room was replaced with a pedal bin, which will allow staff to use a pedal to open the bin to avoid cross-infection risk. Bin will be empty after every session, 3 times a day.

General Safety

3. Windows in upstairs summer camp room were secured with window restrictors. Manager and staff will be checking restrictors to make sure that windows are secured.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documentary evidence

Summary Comment

The person in charge submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances, together with documentary and photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted, the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. This was evidenced by the availability of 2 'FAR' certificates and a review of the staff rota.

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