

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC223
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Buddies Pre-School
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	Ballynoe, Whitescross, Co Cork
----------------------------	--------------------------------

Eircode:	T23 EW7E
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Hobbs
-------------------------------------	------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	07/10/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

Little Buddies Pre-school is a registered privately owned early years service. This service is registered to cater for children from 2-6 years and at time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years offering a morning sessional service. The service also caters to the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 9am to 12:30pm each day Monday to Friday.

Little Buddies Pre-school is located on the grounds of a detached domestic setting in a rural area in Ballynoe, Whitescross, Co Cork. The service consists of two playrooms which have been adapted to provide an early years service. Room 1 is located in a separate building to the side of the domestic dwelling and Room 2 operates from one room located in a domestic dwelling. The children in both rooms have access to a designated covered outdoor play area to the rear side of Room 1.

Staffing

There are six adults attached to the service. All six staff work directly with the children, including the registered provider.

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.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than 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 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, it was identified that the service was operating at different hours than registered. The service is registered to operate from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.30pm to 3.30pm, however, the service is operating from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 9.30am to 12.30pm. The inspector explained that a Change in Circumstance must be applied for to the Early Years Inspectorate to address the change in session hours.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider promptly applied for a change of circumstance and was approved.

Supporting documentation submitted

The change of circumstance was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

All correspondence was examined. The non-compliance under Regulation 8 (1) has been rectified, and the requirement has been met.

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 deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.
 - (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, childcare practitioners and relief workers.
- (2) There are six staff attached to the service; all six staff files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 12 references required, 12 validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Of the 12 references required, no validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all six staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required for any of the six adults working in the service.
- (4) All six staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In Room 1, there was two staff working with seven children aged between 3 years and 5 years, all were attending sessional care.
- In Room 2, there was two staff working with nine children aged between 2 years and 6 months and 4 years, all were attending sessional care.

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

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 service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of a child.
- All low laying cables were safely secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was secured to ensure no unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of sight and reach of children.

Infection control:

- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children's hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play.
- Windows were opened for natural air ventilation.
- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.
- Pedal operated bins were available on the premises.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

Garda vetting was available for all six staff members. However, four vetting disclosures out of the six, were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The registered provider applied for four garda vetting renewals promptly. The registered provider will ensure to apply for garda vetting every three years.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

The required garda vetting disclosures for the four adults were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

All correspondence was examined. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has been rectified, and the requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member in each room. On discussion with staff, each staff member was diligent of ensuring the child attendance records were maintained throughout the day.

- (3)
- (a) The registered provider and deputy person in charge ensured that no person other than a pre-school child, parent or guardian of pre-school child or staff member can enter the service without being approved by an employee.
- (b) A visitor record was in place in the service. This record was stored on the premises.

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 a member of staff with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children at all times.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored out of reach of children and easily accessible by adults in the care room.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times; in the event they required it.

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) The service had maintained a record on the following:

(a) Each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 06 October 2025 and 17 September 2025.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm was available. The records on file demonstrated the last check on the fire extinguishers was 06 February 2025 and the smoke alarm was 06 February 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.