

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC241
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Treasures
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Elm Court, Gort an Óir, Castlemartyr, Cork, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P25 Y684
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre Linehan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM	20
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N O'Donoghue
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Little Treasures is a registered privately owned early years service in operation since 2006. This service provides education and care to children aged from 0 to 6 years offering full day care service, part-time day care and a sessional service for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 8am to 6pm each day, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a purpose-built childcare facility located on the ground floor of an apartment complex in a residential estate in a rural village of Castlemartyr, Co Cork. There are five playrooms in the service, however four playrooms operate during the summer months. (Cheeky Monkeys room is not in operation during the summer). The service also caters for school age children. The service had one separate designated sleep room located beside Little Angels Room, administration office, reception area, a kitchen, staff room, storerooms, adult and children's sanitary facilities, nappy changing facilities. The service has a designated secure outdoor area located beside the premises.

### Staffing

There are 19 staff in total. Of these 19 staff, 18 work directly with the children. The registered provider was not based in the service 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

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.

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, 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-*

- (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 persons in charge, early years educators and relief workers.
- (2) There are 19 staff that work in the service; all 19 staff files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 38 references required, 33 validated references were available from past employers.
  - (b) Of the 38 references required, 5 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 19 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Year Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
  - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file.

(4) All 19 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.*

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

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

- In the Little Rascals room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 3 children aged between 2 years and 2 and a half years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 3 children.
- In the Little Angels room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 2 babies aged between 12 months and 18 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 1 baby.
- In the Junior Afterschool room in the morning, there were no children present. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 4 early years children aged between 4 years and 5 years and 7 school aged children.

- In the Little Einsteins room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 13 children aged between 2 years 11 months and 5 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 12 children.

- (8)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

### 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) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 12 of the children registered as attending the service. The records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

### 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:*

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

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(i) The details of staff rosters were inspected. Break cover and staff roles were clearly outlined.

### 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.

#### Basic needs:

- Children had access to their individual, labelled water bottle throughout the day. Staff were observed bringing their water bottles to outdoor play.
- Mealtimes were observed as a calm, relaxed environment and staff members sat with the children and assisted them when eating and drinking.
- Staff engaged in social conversations during mealtimes and throughout the day.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly attended to. Staff were observed reminding older children about bathroom breaks.
- Children's nappies were changed frequently after mealtimes and as required throughout the day.

- Staff were observed engaging in play with the children by sitting on the floor or at child level tables. Staff in the baby room were playing with dolls and a bathtub and using positive language with the children.
- Children had free access to the outdoor area from the Little Angels room and Little Rascals room.
- Children had access to a wide variety of toys and equipment. These included sensory toys such as water play, and fine motor skills such as jigsaws.
- Staff were attentive to children's needs. This was observed in the Little Angels room where staff noticed when children became hungry or tired and would adapt the routine to suit the child's needs.

### 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 with a buzzer lock system. This prevented the access of unauthorised adults or the exit of children unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was secured with locked gates, preventing the exit of a child unsupervised.
- All low laying cables were out of reach of children.
- Visibility strips were observed on low laying windows in the care rooms.
- All emergency exit doors were clear of obstruction.
- Highchairs were in use in the Little Angels room, and all were fitted with safety harnesses.

##### Infection control:

- Staff were observed cleaning tables between activities and prior to meal times.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Handwashing was observed after outdoor play and before snack time. Staff were observant of handwashing and ensured children's hands were clean from dirt from outdoor play.

##### Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the process of administering medication.

##### Safe sleep:

- Staff were observed conducting 10-minute sleep checks and recording them on their own sleep checklist.

- There were four cots in the Little Angels sleep room, each fitted with waterproof mattress covers.

### Fire safety:

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

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General safety:

1. The water temperature in the children's sanitary facility adjacent to the Junior Afterschool room was greater than 43 °C. This posed a risk of burns or injury to children using the facility.

#### Infection control:

2. The pedal bin located in the sanitary facility adjacent to the Little Einsteins room had a broken lid. For children to use the bin they had to touch the lid which posed a risk of cross infection.
3. During the nappy changing process, it was observed that a staff member did not wash their hands between nappy changes and did not dispose of their apron and gloves between each change. This posed a risk of infection to children as infection control procedures were not adhered to.
4. There were torn mats identified in the Little Einsteins room. Due to the mats being torn, regular cleaning of the mats was difficult to complete. This posed a risk of cross contamination to children in the room.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General safety:

1. The person in charge had organised for a plumber to assess the water temperatures in the sanitary facilities adjacent to the Junior Afterschool room. The water will be regulated, and regular risk assessments will be completed.

#### Infection control:

2. The pedal bin has been replaced with a new functioning bin. Staff will continue to monitor bins to ensure they are working.
3. Staff reviewed their nappy changing policy. Policies will be reviewed during supervision and staff meetings.
4. The mats were removed from the room and new mats were purchased. Staff will complete regular checks on flooring.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

### General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the appointment with the plumber was submitted to the Early Years Department.

### Infection control:

2. Photographic evidence of the new foot operated bin was submitted to the Early Years Department.
3. The updated nappy changing policy was submitted to the Early Years Department.
4. Photographic evidence of the new mats in the Little Einsteins room was submitted to the Early Years Department.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliances identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Compliance Information

(d) The service appeared in a clean and maintained state. Each room conducted their own cleaning routines and records were maintained daily and weekly.

(e) Sanitary facilities were deemed appropriate for the number of children attending the service. The nappy changing area was adequate to cater to the needs of the children. Waste was managed appropriately with staff emptying bins throughout the day which prevented an odour from developing.