

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC244				
Name of Service:	S & R Childcare Little Treasures Pre-school				
Address of Service:	Station Road, Millstreet, Co. Cork				
Eircode:	P51 HH27				
Name of Registered Provider:	Rena Cooper				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	27/10/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>24</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	24	PM	N/A
AM	24	PM	N/A		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59				
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel				
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
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Description of service

S & R Childcare Little Treasures Pre-school is a private early years sessional service in operation since 2007, facilitating children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. While the service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 years to 6 years, children currently attending are aged from 2 years 8 months to 5 years old. There are two sessions in operation; one in the morning from 9.00 am until 12 noon, and one in the afternoon from 12.30 pm until 3.30 pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year.

It operates from a purposefully converted house, located at the end of a row of houses, on a side street in the town of Millstreet in North Cork. It comprises a small entrance area, large care room off which there is an office with adult sanitary facilities, two children's toilets and a small covered, dedicated, outdoor play area accessible from the care room at the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are currently two staff working in the service, 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 and 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, deputy 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge, on the day of inspection, and a named person was available to deputise.
 - (b) Both the designated person and the named person were present throughout the inspection process.
 - (c) A clear management structure was detailed on the notice board of the service.
- (2) Recruitment files for both adults were reviewed:

- (a) (b) There was one validated reference from a past employer and three validated references from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were on file for both adults.
- (d) Three police vetting disclosures were on file for two adults who had resided outside of Ireland for a period of six consecutive months or longer as adults.
- (4) Both adults held an award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (8)
- (c) The staff roster indicated that the named person operates the service single handedly in the afternoon session with three children. The registered provider is the designated person on call in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not ensure that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.
- (3) There were twenty-four children attending the morning sessional service with two adults in attendance. In conversation, staff stated that both morning and afternoon sessional children were attending the Halloween party on the morning of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were submitted by the registered provider:

- (1) The adult/child ratios will be maintained at all times.
- (3) In future, the adult/child ratios will be adhered to. Morning and afternoon parties will be organised to ensure the adult/child ratios are met.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The statement from the registered provider that the adult/child ratios will be maintained at all times has been accepted.
- (3) The statement from the registered provider that parties will be held in the morning and afternoon in order to maintain the adult/child ratios has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 11 (1) and (3) have been adequately addressed.

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:

- The healthy eating policy and suggestions for snacks were available for parents to view in the parent handbook. Foods observed being served on the day of inspection, at 11.10 am, were healthy and nutritious in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Fruit was cut into small pieces and grapes were halved.
- Children had access to water from individually labelled, reusable, water bottles which were available throughout the morning from above the fridge.
- Staff supported the children to engage positively with one another. The children were encouraged to turn take when called to choose their treats for the Halloween party.
- Children's dignity and privacy was respected in the sanitary area with children observed closing the cubicle doors while others washed their hands in the two available wash hand basins.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff were observed sitting with the children during snack engaging in social conversation. The children were excited with both staff and children discussing the impending Halloween party after snack time. Snack time was noted to be unhurried with one child sitting eating snack long after the others had left the table.
- Children requiring help with taking off their costumes while going to the toilet were assisted by both staff members.
- The service works in partnership with parent's/guardians in regard to communication. Information around the children's daily needs was stated as being exchanged face to face at collection, by phone or email. Parent's/guardians who wished to discuss their child's progress individually are accommodated after sessional hours, as required. Parents/guardians are also kept informed by way of a monthly work sheet informing them of the up-and-coming activities for the month, a copy of same was furnished to the inspector.

- Monthly minutes of staff meetings were available detailing planning for future activities and matters arising. Staff stated that meetings also take place informally each day.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Ongoing observations detailing the children’s needs and interests which were linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, were documented along with artwork related to themes such as Autumn, Halloween, Healthy Eating and Birthdays. Staff stated these are shared with parent’s/guardians.
- Children’s language and development was supported through group discussions, songs and storytelling. Examples on the day included a staff member heard reading “The Biggest, Baddest Wolf” and children singing and dancing with great gusto to action songs including the “Haunted House” along with other Halloween songs.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors during the day.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The children were noted to have playful opportunities to enhance their learning needs across all developmental areas which were all well-resourced. Examples included opportunities for cognitive development in the puzzle area with children’s individual age and stage of development catered for from one piece inset puzzles to twelve-, twenty-four- and forty-eight-piece puzzles. Imaginary play materials were available including a home corner, hair dressing station, baskets of animals, dolls houses, vehicles and buggies. A large arts and crafts area with crayons, pencils and bottles of paint provided opportunities for creativity. Materials were available from baskets on low-level shelving which facilitated choice and independence. There was a small outdoor play area located at the rear of the service which had artificial grass underfoot. The area was covered overhead ensuring the children could go outdoors in all weathers. There was a variety of materials including chalk and blackboards for mark making, skittles, balls and plastic hockey sticks providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills, a well-stocked mud kitchen and a box of vehicles for imaginary play opportunities and a slide offering an element of risky play.

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 was secured upon arrival with a key lock, preventing unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The three blind cords on the care room windows were secured with hooks, which were inaccessible to the children.
- Heavy equipment and storage were anchored to the walls.
- All flexes and cords were removed out of reach of the children.
- Waste materials were stored in pedal operated bins in the service.
- Cleaning materials were secured under the care room sink by a child proof lock.
- The kitchen area in the office was closed making it inaccessible to the children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secured with a stone wall and high wooden panelling making it accessible to unauthorised adults.
- The oil tank was secured behind wooden panelling in the outdoor area, preventing children accessing the area.

Infection Control:

- The children and adults had access to thermostatically controlled hot water, 30°C, dispensing soap, blue roll to dry their hands and pedal operated bins to dispose of waste.
- The children were observed washing their hands before and after snack. Staff were on hand to provide assistance, if required.
- Staff were observed disinfecting the tables before and after food. A staff member was also observed sweeping the floor ensuring that the area was kept safe and hygienic.
- All sweeping brushes were secured on hooks, off the floor area, and were stored out of reach of the children.
- Perishable food was stored in the two fridges in the care room, preventing the food from spoiling.
- An up-to-date cleaning sheet was available detailing the areas and items to be cleaned on a daily basis.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered during the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The rest quiet area available for children, to sit quietly, was furnished with children's soft chairs, a bean and soft cushions. A brightly patterned rug with squares was positioned on the floor area.
- The walls of the rest/quiet area were padded with safety mats providing a safe area for children to sit and rest comfortably.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) There were no window restrictors fitted on six windows of the care room, posing a safety risk to the the children.
- (2) Three bait boxes were visible on the floor of the care room and accessible to the children, posing a safety risk should the children come into contact with the contents of the boxes.
- (3) A child's chair located in the rest/quiet area, which had exposed foam due to a large tear in the fabric, posed a safety risk to the children as they were able to pick small pieces of foam from the chair representing a choking hazard. When the inspector spoke with the registered provider about the chair, it was removed from the area.

Administration of Medication:

- (4) There was no anti-febrile medication available, posing a safety risk in the event of a child having a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

- (5) The fire exit/emergency door, which led to the outdoor lane way, was not fitted with an alarm. This posed a safety risk as a child could leave the building unsupervised by way of the push bar located at child height on the door.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

General Safety:

- (1) Window restrictors have been fitted to the rooms to prevent the children exiting from them.
- (2) The bait boxes will be removed before each session and replaced when the children are not in the service.
- (3) The chair was removed on the day of inspection and the soft furnishings will be checked regularly.

Administration of Medication:

(4) Anti-febrile medication has been purchased and is now available in the service.

Fire Safety:

(5) A touch alarm has been installed on the fire/exit emergency door. This will be checked regularly to ensure it is working.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) Photographs of the windows fitted with safety locks and restrictors were received on 17 November 2023.
- (2) The statement from the registered provider that the bait boxes will be removed before each session and replaced when the children are not present has been accepted.
- (3) The statement from the registered provider that the chair was removed on the day of inspection and the soft furnishings will be checked regularly has been accepted.

Administration of Medication:

(4) A photograph of the anti-febrile medication, in its original box, was submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Fire Safety:

(5) A photograph of the fire exit door fitted with an alarm was received in the office of the inspectorate on 17 November 2023.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) There was a certificate on file to evidence that one adult trained in first aid for children was available at all times.

(2)

(a) (b) The first aid bag was stored on a shelf in the care room and was easily accessible to the adults. It was available throughout the inspection.

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 firefighting 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 record of the monthly fire drills was available with the most recent date recorded as 25 October 2023.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) There was no recent written record of the latest number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment or the smoke alarm system. The last record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 26 September 2022. In addition, there was no written record available

for the smoke alarm certificate. In conversation, the registered provider furnished the inspector with an email confirming that the engineer had an appointment for Tuesday 31 October 2023 at 10.30 am to address these issues.

- (4) There was no notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. Having clear procedures available in the event of a fire enhances the safety of staff and children in the service in the event of a fire or an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (b) The firefighting equipment certificate has been completed by the engineer. The smoke alarm service has been organised.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire/emergency have been put up in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) The registered provider submitted a copy of the firefighting equipment certificate, dated 31 October 2023, which was received in the office of the inspectorate on the 31 October 2023. The smoke alarm certificate was received in the office of the inspectorate dated 4 December 2023.
- (4) A copy of the notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire/emergency were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 26 (1) (b) and (4).

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the pre-school service was insured. The expiry date was noted as 27 November 2023. The service was insured for twenty-two Montessori children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service appeared of sound and stable structure.
- (c) The care room and sanitary areas were well lit with both artificial and natural light.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) The wooden gate in the outdoor play area was broken off its hinges and left lying on the grass.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d) The gate has been repaired and is now in operation. All outdoor fixtures will be checked on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (d) A photograph of the reinstated wooden gate in the outdoor play area was received in the office of the inspectorate on 17 November 2023. The statement from the registered provider that the outdoor fixtures will be checked regularly has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under Regulation 29 (d) has been adequately addressed.