

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE001				
Name of Service:	Little Deers				
Address of Service:	North West Clare Family Resource Centre, Ardnaculla, Ennistymon, Co. Clare				
Eircode:	V95 HRC3				
Name of Registered Provider:	Jan Godfrey				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	12/06/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>32</td> <td>PM</td> <td>27</td> </tr> </table>	AM	32	PM	27
AM	32	PM	27		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy & J.Hayes
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Little Deers was established in 2018. The service operates from one of two Northwest Clare Family Resource Centre premises on the outskirts of Ennistymon town, County Clare. The programme of care and education is facilitated Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:30 on a full day, part time and sessional care basis for children aged one to six years. The building comprises of a bungalow structure and has enclosed outdoor play areas to the front, rear and side of the premises.

The programme of care and education was provided in three care rooms Caterpillar/Cocoon rooms were combined in one room (age range: one to two years), and the Butterfly room (age range: three to five years). A school aged service is also provided in the Bumblebee room which is adjacent to the Butterfly room. The Bumblebee room was used by the preschool children to sleep during the day.

Staffing

The registered provider is one of the company directors and the chairperson of the management committee for the service. The registered provider is not directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the service. Fifteen adults are employed by the service. On the 12 June 2025 the following adults were present: a manager, five adults who worked directly with the children, two adults on induction, an adult on a work activation programme and one adult worked directly with the school aged children. An auxiliary person is employed to repair and maintain the service and a cleaner is employed in the evenings after operational hours.

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 announced focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26- Fire safety measures

Regulation 28- Insurance

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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

(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 manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Sixteen files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults working by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Eighteen written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Eleven written and validated references from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the sixteen adults currently working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of an adult working in the service who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

Three references with evidence of validation from a referee in respect of two adults were not available.

(2)(d)

International police vetting with evidence of translation to English was not available in respect of an adult working in the service who had lived in two States for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2)

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a)(b)

The service received the two references required for this staff member.

The service has received the references for this staff member

(d)

The service has submitted police vetting for both countries for this staff member. A copy of the police vetting clearances were submitted. The police vetting clearances submitted to the inspectorate and assessed by the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of references.

Copy of police vetting clearances.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action responses and evidence submitted by the registered provider were reviewed.

The non compliances are addressed under Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) and (2)(d).

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, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 12 June 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Five adults cared for the thirty-two children attending in the morning and six adults cared for the twenty-seven children in attendance in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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 children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. Three care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions with the children. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner. The adults used soft tones of voice and conversed with the children at their level and listened attentively during conversations. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance, to be held and to be hugged. A key person approach was adopted in each care room. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the children's individual preferences, interests and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of activities.

The children's nappies were changed on an individual need's basis, and the adults carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time. The adults promoted the children to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children's cues for sleep were responded in a prompt and calm manner, and children who did not wish to sleep were provided with alternative play based and learning activities. Individually designed areas were provided for the children in the indoor area with soft furnishings and reading materials and used by the children periodically to rest and relax. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable period whereby the children and adults conversed amicably. The babies were encouraged to feed themselves and were promoted to be independent. Suitable age-appropriate

crockery and feeding utensils were provided during mealtime. The children’s parents provided nutritious foods, and water was freely available and accessible at all times.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor environment offered an enriching and challenging experience for the children in attendance. The care rooms and the adjacent outdoor areas were bright, spacious and appropriately resourced for the age range and developmental level of the children. The rooms were laid out with designated interest areas, using natural, open-ended materials and equipment. The rooms were individually designed with displays of colourful artwork, individual creative pieces, colourful, learning and literacy aids. Family photos were displayed in all rooms at the children’s eye level to support children’s sense of belonging in the service.

The outdoor play areas and the orchard were very well resourced and offered an inviting and challenging space for the children to freely explore and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, imaginative, constructive and gross motor activities. Each care room had access to a designated outdoor space adjacent to their room and had access to a well maintained and resourced sensory garden. The designated outdoor spaces were individually designed with developmentally appropriate play and educational materials and equipment. Waterproof clothing and footwear were available for outdoor play during wet weather conditions for both the adults and the children. The children predominantly used the outdoor play areas and were observed to be offered choice in relation to their play preferences and thoroughly enjoy the range of activities provided.

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:

- A key coded, bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- The outdoor areas are checked by adults to ensure they are safe prior to use each day.
- Unauthorised adults signed in and out on record book.

- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The highchairs were maintained in adequate condition with fitted safety harnesses in the baby room.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were in place throughout the premises.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Photographic illustrations of hand hygiene techniques were displayed over the wash hand basins to prompt children to wash their hands.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, after using the toilet and on return from outdoor play and before mealtime.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually in containers.
- All cot mattresses were fitted with waterproof washable covers.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The registered provider demonstrated an understanding of the administration of medication policy.
- Documentation was available for the adults to use should medication be administered in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The manager and the adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's safe sleep policy.
- Children were placed to sleep in their individual standard cots and low-level beds.
- A thermometer was available in the areas where children were placed to sleep for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures. The room temperatures were maintained between 18-22°Celsius.
- The adults recorded the sleeping children's observations every ten minutes during sleep periods on a written record.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- Fire assembly points were readily identifiable and identified by the adults working in the service.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that only one outing is undertaken every year with the children the senior preschool children. A risk assessment and an outings checklist are completed for every outing.
- The registered provider demonstrated an awareness of the service's outings policy and procedure.

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)
Six adults had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and the staff roster indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.

(2)(a)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible and conspicuous areas in the service.

(b)
The first aid boxes were available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)(a)
Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 06 May 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment took place on the 14 April 2025 and the smoke alarm system took place on the 12 June 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices were displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for fifty-five pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.