

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE001
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Name of Service:	Little Deers
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Address of Service:	North West Clare Family Resource Centre, Ardnaculla, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jan Godfrey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection Day 1:	05/07/2023
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Date of Inspection Day 2:	06/07/2023
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No of pre-school children Day 1:	AM	40	PM	35
No of pre-school children Day 2n:		29		29

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	Á. McCarthy
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	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 is facilitated Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:30 providing full day, part time and sessional care for preschool children aged one to six years. The building comprises of a bungalow structure and has enclosed outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises. The programme of care and learning is provided in the Caterpillar room (age range: 2-3 years), the Cocoon room (age range: 1-2 years) and the Butterfly room (age range: 3-6 years). A school aged service is also provided in the Bumblebee room which is adjacent to the Butterfly room.

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. Seventeen employees work in the service including a manager and fifteen staff who work directly with the children. An auxiliary staff member is employed to repair and maintain the service and a cleaner is employed in the evenings after operational hours. Documentary evidence was available of the staff members engagement in training and education.

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, and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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 person in charge, the staff and the 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,

(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 designated person in charge and the assistant manager was available to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.

Seventeen files were available in respect of the registered provider, the manager and fifteen members of staff who work during the service's hours of operation. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Twenty-one references were sourced from past employers and validated.

(b)
Where past employer references were not available, eight references were obtained from a source other than a past employer and validated.

(c)
Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider and seventeen employees.

(d)
International police vetting was not required, as no member of staff had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)
The staff working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b)
1. Two written and validated references were not available for two members of staff employed by the service.
 2. Three references were deemed unsuitable; these references were sourced from acquaintances of the employees.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2)(a)(b)

Corrective and Preventive Action

References were obtained for the staff which were not available on inspection and the unsuitable references have been updated and placed on file.

All new staff members going forward will be asked for two suitable references from past employer or if past employer is not available a suitable source.

Supporting documentation submitted

References

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers response the regulatory requirements are met.

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 attending the pre-school service.

(2)
An adequate number of adults supervised the children attending the service on a full day and part-time basis. On the 5th of July 2023, ten members of staff cared for forty children in the morning and seven members of staff cared for twenty-nine preschool children in the afternoon. On the 6th of July 2023 seven members of staff cared for the twenty-nine children attending the service.

(8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that more than two adults were available to care for the children at all times.

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)
Fifty-five written records were available in respect of the number of children enrolled in the service. The enrolment forms were reviewed by the inspector, the forms included the required particulars outlined from (a)-(i).

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 inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff interacted with the children in a caring and respectful manner. This was observed by the staff conversing with the children at their level, in a soft tone of voice and staff responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's personal interests and capabilities. Staff supported the children to be independent in their chosen play-based activities both individually and as part of a group. The children were encouraged to care for their personal belongings, feed themselves and use the toilet independently. Mealtimes were observed to be unhurried and relaxed. Individual place mats and crockery were provided for each child. The children sat and conversed amicably with their peers and infants were promoted to feed themselves.

The rooms were bright and the children's artwork and individual creations using nursery rhymes were displayed in the care rooms. The indoor environment provided an adequate range of developmentally appropriate play equipment and materials suitable for the age range and number of children in attendance. Resources were accessible and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials. Each room had a low-level unit to store the children's personal belongings, low level tables and chairs and an accessible area for the children to relax and read as required. Designated areas of interest were available to include: a home corner, art areas, soft furnishing for the babies, dress up section, construction area and accessible shelving with large and small animals, blocks, dolls and accessories. Journals for each child were available demonstrating the creative work, play and learning activities that the children engaged in during the year.

The enclosed outdoor area offered a space where the children could freely move and explore on an all-weather surface. A perimeter was secured by metal fencing, concrete and stone walls, lockable gates and the external wall of the building.

The children were observed engaging in sand and water play, blowing bubbles, building with large and small blocks, using the climbing frame and slide, engaging in pretend and sensory play in the mud kitchens and the wooden playhouse. Staff and children sang, recited nursery rhymes, and played games. The children transitioned from the indoor and outdoor environment throughout both days of inspection. Waterproof clothing and footwear were provided for all the children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy that is shared with parents at the beginning of the preschool year. Parents provide their children’s food, which is reheated by the staff as required. Mealtimes included breakfast and lunch, a snack in the morning and in the afternoon. Water was provided throughout the day and at mealtimes in each care room. Food was observed to be healthy and nutritious, and the variety of food included: yoghurts, cheese, crackers, a variety of breads, pasta dishes, sandwiches or wraps with fillings such ham and cheese. Children also enjoyed a variety of vegetables and fruits which included broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, bananas, blueberries and cucumber slices.

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 entrance to the service was secured by a bell operated, key coded system with high level switches to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service and unsupervised children from leaving the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a high-level fence and secured gates.
- Looped blind cords were secured out of reach of the children.
- The furniture, equipment and materials in the service were maintained in good condition.
- Storage areas with hazardous items within were secured.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition, the surfaces and equipment were cleaned after use.
- Warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels were available to support good handwashing practices.
- The children's and adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included after messy and outdoor play, after using the toilet, nappy changes and before mealtimes.
- Individual bed linen was available for the children.
- The children's soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in fridges.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service policy. Documentation was available detailing parental consent to administer prescription and non-prescription medication when required and parental signatures were recorded after medication was given.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under two years of age were placed to sleep in standard cots in the designated sleep room. Low level beds were available for children to rest over two years of age.
- The children's sleep observations detailing their position, colour and breathing were recorded by staff.
- The room temperature in the designated sleep room was maintained between 16 to 20 degrees Celsius.
- A thermometer was available for staff to measure, monitor and record the sleep room temperature.

Fire Safety:

- Members of staff had evidence of completed fire training.
- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The service's fire assembly point was readily identifiable for staff and children.
- The staff and children undertake monthly fire drills to prepare for emergency situations.

Outing:

- The manager and staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's outing's policy. Risk assessments and a checklist were completed prior to outings from the service.

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)

It is acknowledged that all staff had undertaken paediatric first aid training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in readily identifiable areas in each care room and the office.

(b)

First aid boxes were available in each room and the office for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

Staff did not have evidence of up to date first aid responder training on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)

Corrective and Preventive Action

FAR training has been booked for three staff members on 11th, 18th & 24th of August 2023. FAR training will be kept updated going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certificates of completed training.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers response the requirement is met.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 5th of July 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent smoke alarm system and firefighting equipment maintenance service took place respectively on the 3rd of April 2023 and 12th of July 2022.

(4)

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

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 55 pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.