

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE072			
Name of Service:	Lifford Childcare Centre			
Address of Service:	The Green, Lifford, Ennis, Co. Clare			
Eircode:	V95 AK26			
Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Touhy			
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	25/04/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	37
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, County Clare.			
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

Lifford Childcare Centre is a privately owned, purpose built, two storey premises, located at the entrance to a residential estate in Ennis. The service is registered to provide a full day, part-time and sessional care service for 55 children, the children currently range in age from one to six years. The programme of care operates from 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday. Three pre-school rooms, a kitchen and office are provided in this service. The baby/toddler “Bunnies” room (age range 1-2 years) is located on the ground floor and the two preschool rooms “Tiger” (age range 3-5 years) and “Penguin” (age range 3-4 years) are located on the first floor. An enclosed, covered outdoor play area is attached to the side and rear of the service.

Staffing

On the 25th April 2023 the manager and twelve members of staff were present. All the members of staff working directly with the children held a qualification in Early Childcare Education and Care ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11 16,

19(1)(a), 20, 23, 25 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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.

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 manager, the 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b)
- A designated person in charge and a person who is able to deputise as required were available at all times in the service.

Fourteen files were available for the manager, twelve members of staff and the relief contact person. These fourteen files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

- (2)
- (a) Twenty-three validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Five references with evidence of verification were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Up to date Garda Vetting disclosures were available for fourteen staff employed by the service.
- (d) International police vetting was available in respect of three members of staff who had lived outside the Jurisdiction for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) The staff working directly with the children, had evidence of Early Childhood Education and Care qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)
The inspector observed that the adult to child ratio was maintained at all times throughout the period of the inspection. On the 25th April 2023 fifty children present were cared for by twelve members of staff in the morning and twelve members of staff supervised thirty-seven children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
 - (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
 - (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
(h)
Details of the children's attendance were recorded on a daily basis. The children's arrival and departure times were recorded on a daily basis.
- (i)
The staff roster recorded the rostered hours for the staff that were employed in the service.
- (j)
Details of medications administered by staff were reviewed by the inspector. Newly developed forms were put in place since the last inspection and recorded a signed parental signature before and after the administration of prescription and non-prescription medications.

(k)
Details of accidents, injuries or incidents involving pre-school children attending the service were recorded in a book with evidence of a parental signatures after the incidents.

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 being supported by the staff. Staff interacted warmly with the children, listened carefully to their stories and questions, responded to them with interest and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the day. Children's language development and communication skills were supported through the positive and on-going conversations observed during the inspection. Children were encouraged to engage positively with each other through supported play activities which facilitated turn taking, listening to others, sharing play resources and being mindful of their peers. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and sociable occasions where the children sat together with the staff and conversed amicably. Water was freely available and accessed by the children in each of the care rooms. The children were treated in a sensitive manner and encouraged to be independent when they used the toilet.

An ethos of good teamwork was observed in each care room as the staff facilitated the programme of care in a cohesive manner. The transitions between the activities in each care room in the indoor and outdoor environment was completed in an organised and calm manner. Consistency of staff provision and the operation of a key worker system provided opportunities for the children to form and sustain secure relationships with the staff who were caring for them in the service.

During observed interactions, the staff demonstrated that they knew the children well, by recognising and valuing their individual interests, needs and learning preferences. The service manager advised the inspector that efforts to ensure partnership and exchange of information was facilitated through an open-door policy, messaging system. The children's individual learning records were sent home to parents/guardians at the end of each term. The inspector was advised that the service had shared policies with parents. Informal exchanges of information took place during the inspection between staff and parents/guardians at the children's arrival and collection times.

The layout of the care rooms in the indoor environment had been carefully developed to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and promote engagement in activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, the equipment and the materials they chose to play with. There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move freely and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and tabletop activities. The wall space was used to display children's artwork, their family wall, a train demonstrating their birthday months. Displays linking the curricular themes to the activities which the children had been learning about were displayed throughout the play environment.

The outdoor play facility was located at the rear and side of the service, this area accommodated a variety of toys and play equipment and supporting materials. This area had an all-weather surface and was enclosed by metal fencing, concrete walls and a gate with a magnetic lock. Play resources were predominately wooden and included a picnic table, stools, mud kitchens, a selection of construction play equipment, a playhouse, a climbing frame and a slide and low-level chalkboards for mark-making. There were various cycling toys including tractors and tricycles, bicycles as well as scooters and ride on vehicles. A side section was currently under development in preparation for planting.

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 to prevent unauthorised access by a person or a child exiting unsupervised.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing, concrete walls and a gate to protect the children within.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible and stored out of the children’s reach.

Infection Control:

- Children routinely washed their hands following toileting, before eating meals and upon returning from outdoor play. Warm running water, liquid soap, and disposable paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the children’s sanitary facilities and care rooms to facilitate effective hand hygiene practices.
- Play equipment and materials were maintained in a visibly clean condition. Staff were observed cleaning high-contact surfaces at various points throughout the day and the tables which the children used at mealtime were cleaned before and after use.
- The children’s parents provided the children’s food and the perishable food items were stored in the fridge in the two kitchens.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service policy to ensure the safe administration of medication.
- The manager had undertaken training with the staff regarding the implementation of the newly modified administration of medication record.
- Medications were stored in a secured cabinet in the kitchen that was inaccessible to the children.

Safe Sleep:

- Standard cots were available in the sleep room leading from the Bunnies room. Sleep beds were available for children aged over two years should they require sleep or rest.
- Sleeping children were monitored every ten minutes and a log was maintained for each child.

- A thermometer was available in the sleep room for staff to monitor and measure the room temperature.
- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of up-to-date safe sleep guidance and the service policy.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit passageways were clear from obstruction and luminated signage identified the fire exits throughout the service.
- The service demonstrated that fire drills were carried out monthly and evidence of the records were available for review by the inspector.
- A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures taken by the service in the event of a fire.

Outing:

- The service did not undertake an outing during the inspection. A service policy was in place in the event that an outing should take place.

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)
Up to date First Aid Responder training was available in respect of three members of staff, the certificates were valid until the 17th of November 2024.

(2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible area in the service.

(b)
The first aid box was available in the kitchen for use by an adult in the event of an emergency.

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

Compliance Information

(d)
The indoor and outdoor environment was maintained in good condition. The service had evidence of completed cleaning schedules and risk assessments demonstrating the measures taken to maintain the premises and minimise risk. The service had been repainted, deep cleaned and sections updated and repaired or disposed of subsequent to the last inspection.