

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE079
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Name of Service:	Little Dreamers Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Castle Road, Coolistigue, Clonlara, Co. Clare
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Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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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:	A.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 Dreamers Pre-school was established in 2014, as a privately owned, sessional service. The service is located in the owners domestic dwelling, in the rural village of Clonlara, County Clare. Care and learning are facilitated Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 12:30 in two care rooms for children ranging in age from three to five years. A large outdoor area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

On the 9th of January three adults including the registered provider worked directly with the children in attendance. The staff working directly with the children held appropriate childcare qualifications at level 6 and 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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19(1)(a); 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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. 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, 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 registered provider was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider was available throughout the inspection.

(2)

Three employee files were available and reviewed by the inspector. The findings included the following:

(a)

One reference was available in respect of one adult from a past employer.

(b)

Four references were available in respect of two adults from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the three adults employed by the service.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as the adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held level 6 and level 8 qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

1. A written reference from a past employer was not available in respect of one adult working in the service.

2. A written reference in respect of one adult working in the service was not validated.

(c)

The Garda vetting disclosures in respect of two adults working in the service were out of date. The Garda vetting disclosures were sourced respectively in 2016 and 2018. Re-vetting of employees is required every three years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)

Both references have been completed. Verified references will be available going forward.

(c)

Up to date Garda Vetting disclosures are available

Supporting documentation submitted

- Written response
- Up to date Garda Vetting.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers response the area of non-compliance under Regulation 9 is addressed. The regulatory requirement is 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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

On the 9th of January 2024 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. Three adults supervised the sixteen children present.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)
The service-maintained records for the seventeen children enrolled in the service. The records included the required particulars outlined from (a) to (i).

(3)
The children's registration forms were open to inspection in the service.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records referred to in paragraph (1) are retained for a period of two years after the children cease to attend the service.

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)

Basic Needs of the Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff demonstrated respect and warmth towards the children in their care, using soft and gentle tones of voice, positive language and engaged with the children at their level. During interactions, staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and learning interests. Staff treated the children with positive regard and completed tasks in a sensitive manner. The staff listened attentively to their stories and questions, responded to them with interest and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the session.

The children were supported to be independent, according to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, caring for their belongings and retrieving their lunches. Open ended play activities predominated for the duration of inspection and the children had access to plenty of free space to move around both indoors and outdoors and the children were free to select which activities they chose to engage with. Children's language development and communication skills were supported through the positive and on-going conversations and discussions about the service themes observed during the inspection. The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their lunch in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Lunchtime was observed to be a sociable occasion for the children who sat and conversed amicably with their peers.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environment featured a range of developmentally appropriate toys, equipment and play materials suitable for the age range and number of children in attendance. The indoor play setting was a bright and colourful space which was decorated to reflect the children's sense of identity and belonging. The wall space was used to display literacy and numeracy aids and birthday illustrations.

The layout of the preschool room was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with. There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move between the two care rooms unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and tabletop activities. The outdoor area was accessible directly from the preschool room to the rear of the service. This area had a wood, grass and a stone surface, the surrounding perimeter was enclosed by fencing and a gate and externally by the school yard and a gated entrance. The play area offered a suitably resourced and enriching space for the children to freely move and engage in physical, pretend play and learning.

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 appropriately secured to protect the children within from leaving unsupervised and to ensure unauthorised persons are unable to gain access to the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded on the service's sign in book.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The children's hands were washed at appropriate intervals after toileting, play and before lunch.
- The sanitary facilities contained warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and pedal operated bins. Child friendly illustrated posters were available above the wash hand basins to prompt children to wash their hands.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given during the inspection. A service policy and documentation were available to inform practice should medication be given.
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Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken during the inspection. A policy was available to inform

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An unsecured trampoline was observed in use by the children. This is at variance with the manufacturer guidelines which recommends that the trampoline is used in a secured and supervised area by children over six years of age. This posed a potential risk of injury to the children.

Infection Control:

2. Perishable food items were not stored in a refrigerator in the service. The children's food items were stored in their lunch bags at the entrance to the service. This posed a potential risk of food contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The trampoline was removed from the service.

Infection Control:

2. The children's lunches are stored in individual bags in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Written response.

Infection Control:

- Written response.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective actions taken by the registered provider the areas of non-compliance are addressed under Regulation 23. The regulatory requirement is met.

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)

Two members of staff had records of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped and accessible first aid box was stored in one care room in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was readily available 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 undertaken in the service.
- (b)
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment.
- (4)
A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b)
A record was not available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance for the smoke alarm system.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

- (1)(b)
Corrective and Preventive Action
The smoke alarm system has been serviced on the 6th of February 2024. Going forward a service will take place yearly.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Written response.

Summary Comment

Based on the information submitted by the registered provider the areas of non-compliance are addressed under Regulation 26(1)(b). The regulatory requirement is met.

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 twenty-two children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 15th of April 2024.