

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE080		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Ducks Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Skehanagh, Clarecastle, Co. Clare		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V95XA31		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Katherine Leydon		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/11/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM 14
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.Ní Nialláin & A.McCarthy		
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Ducks Creche was established in 2011, in Clarecastle, County Clare. The programme of care and education was provided in three care rooms in a single storey, bungalow structure. The childcare facility provides full day, part-time and sessional care Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 17:30 for children ranging in age from six months to six years. A school aged childcare service is available during school holidays. An outdoor play area is located to the side and rear of the premises.

### Staffing

Six adults are employed by the service. On 11 November 2024 the registered provider and four adults worked directly with the children. The registered provider provided an administrative role, reheated and served the food and worked directly with the children.

### 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 focused on an examination of compliance under:

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

**Regulation 11** - Staffing levels (1) (3) (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 (1) (2)(a)(b)

**Regulation 26** - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

**Regulation 28** – Insurance

**Regulation 29** – Premises (e)

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 registered provider, 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 registered provider was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Six files were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

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

- (b)  
Six written and validated references were available in respect the adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)  
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six adults employed 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 for one adult working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)  
Six adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 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)  
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)  
On the 11 November 2024, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the care rooms. Five adults cared for the seventeen children attending the service in the morning and five adults cared for fourteen children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)  
During the inspection more than two adults were available on the premises 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, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to age and level of development of the children:

#### Basic Needs of Children:

The adults cared for the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The children were treated in a sensitive manner, soft tones of voice were used, and the children's needs were responded to promptly. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The children were supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The transitions in the children's activities were completed with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably with their peers and the adult. The parents/guardians provided the children's food. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The transitions in activities were completed in a calm manner and the children were notified in advance of these changes.

### Physical and Material Environment:

Two care rooms were in operation during the inspection. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging activities and were observed to be fully engaged in the play-based programme. The care rooms were well-resourced and were laid out for the children to readily access the equipment and materials. Numerical and alphabetical learning aids and creative work were displayed on the walls in the care rooms. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care rooms were appropriately resourced with, pretend wooden kitchens, a pretend play shop and an area for the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children. The outdoor play area was located to the side and rear of the service. This area had a natural grass surface. The children had access to slides, a swing, a sand table, a basketball net, a water activity unit, a mud kitchen, a swing, an area with seating and a flower bed.

### 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 was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured to protect the children within, and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in a record book.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- Looped blind cords were secured on the window frames and inaccessible to the children.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, sneezing, using the toilet and before mealtime.
- The children's personal belongings were stored in individually labelled containers.

### Administration of Medication:

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

### Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room accommodated standard sized cots for the babies to sleep.
- The sleep room and care room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 °Celsius in the areas where children sleep. A thermometer was available for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy. The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

### Fire Safety:

- The adults had evidence on file of engagement in fire safety and fire marshal training.
- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes, and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

### Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken during the inspection.
- An outings policy was available to inform the adults and parents/guardian of the service's outings procedure.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

1. Wipeable mattresses were not available in three standard sized cots. This posed a potential risk of cross infection.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control

1. New mattresses and waterproof covers have been purchased and placed in the cots. The covers will be replaced as guided by the manufacturers.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

1. A photograph

## Summary Comment

Based on the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, the non-compliance is addressed. 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)

Three adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was accessible in a central position in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was 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 carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 25 October 2024.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment took place on the 08 March 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Up-to-date records were not available for the maintenance service of the smoke alarm system. The last service of the smoke alarm system took place in 2021.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(b)

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A quotation has been received and activated from the fire company, to install and maintain an upgraded smoke alarm system. The fire company are hopeful the job will be completed in December 2024/January 2025. Work will need to be carried out at a time when children are not on the premises. The fire company will carry out regular maintenance checks as part of their contract. The inspectorate will be notified once the work is completed.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentary evidence.

## Summary Comment

Based on the proposed actions and evidence submitted the non-compliance will be addressed in January 2025. The implemented actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

## 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-four pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 – Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(e)  
Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were not available for the children:

1. The nappy changing area was positioned adjacent to two toilet bowls and prevented the sanitary door from opening fully.
2. The sanitary facility for the children did not promote dignity and privacy, the wooden barrier dividing the toilets was too low and each cubicle did not have a door to create an individual cubicle. Toileting and nappy changing could not take place at the same time.

This non-compliance was found on last inspection 07 July 2022.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. As an interim measure the nappy changing facility is in the middle room. A new nappy changing area will be in place in 2025. A kitchen Helper has been purchased so all children can reach the sink to wash their hands after nappy changes

2. A larger barrier has been put in place between the existing toilets, only one child is permitted in the toilets at a time and the children are encouraged to use the toilet nearer the window to promote dignity and privacy. Quotations have been put in place to install two new toilets with direct access to the preschool room. The service is aiming to get new toilets installed by the end of Jan 2025

There are actions being taken to install new toilets in an existing shed, once this is completed the changing table will be returned to its original place.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentary evidence.

### **Summary Comment**

Based on the registered provider's proposed actions, the area of non-compliance has been addressed. Interim measures have been put in place. The implemented actions will be reviewed on next inspection