

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CN041 |
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| Name of Service: | Little Stars Play School and After School |
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| Address of Service: | 31 Bellamont View, Cootehill, Co. Cavan |
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| Eircode: | H16Y310 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Diane Dawson |
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| Service type: | Part Time |
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| Date(s) of Inspection: | 30/11/2023 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 9 | PM | No. |
|-----------------------------------|----|---|----|-----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath |
| Inspection undertaken by: | C Tunney |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

Little Stars Play-school and After School is a non-profit community based childcare facility. The service is located in Cootehill town, easily accessible to the community. The service provides part time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years. A school aged service is also offered to 30 children registered to attend. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 08:00am to 18:00 hrs Monday to Friday and caters for a maximum of 54 children.

Staffing

There are seven staff employed in the service including one manager, one deputy and five childcare staff. All staff work directly with pre-school children. The registered provider is not involved in the day to day running of the service and was not present for the inspection.

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. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 Manager, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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) A manager was appointed as the person-in-charge and a named person who can deputise when required was available. The registered provider was not present for the inspection.

(b) Staff rosters and staff sign in records were available for inspection and indicated that the person-in-charge and/or the named person who can deputise are on the premises during the hours of operation of the service.

(c) Staff members were aware of the management structure in the service, the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) Seven staff files were reviewed.

(a) Seven written past employer references were available and validated.

(b) In the absence of past employer references, 7 validated references from a source other than an employer was available

(c) Seven staff files reviewed had the required garda vetting documents available for inspection.

(d) One staff member had the required international police vetting available for inspection.

(4) Seven staff members providing direct care to pre-school children had documentation to show that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The children were attending the service on a sessional or part-time basis.

(2)

- Room 1: there were 9 children aged between 2 years 10 months old to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members attending the service on a sessional basis. Twenty-four children are registered to attend.
- Room 2 (on first floor): Not in operation on the day of inspection.

(8) Two staff members are present, at all times, in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8) as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance/ sign in which were available for inspection.

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-

- (b) an authorised person,

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 15 (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i). Eleven children's enrolment records were inspected.

(3)(b) The children's enrolments records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

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 service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
 - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
 - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
 - (e) the facilities available;*
 - (f) the opening hours and fees;*
 - (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
 - (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.*
- (3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 16 (a)(b) (c) (d)(e)(f)(g) (h)(i) (j)(k) in relation to the service were available for inspection.

These records were available in folders such as a folder containing the service policies and procedures, individual staff folders which included training records and staff details. Information in relation to staff names and qualifications were displayed for the attention of staff and parents/guardians.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were made available.

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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

- The children's basic care needs were met on the day of inspection. The service promoted healthy eating, food and snacks were provided by the parents/guardians. Children's drinks were available within their reach which they could access as they wished.
- Children were encouraged and facilitated to move freely between the adjoining care rooms to engage in play material of their choice.
- The children were encouraged to be independent, suitable to their age and stage of development. Assistance was given as required.
- Child led care was noted, as children moved from one activity to another and from one room to the other adjoining room.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff members were observed responding promptly to the verbal and non-verbal cues of each child. They were observed being kind and respectful to all children by using their name, and gentle vocal tones when speaking to children. Children were encouraged to take part in activities and afforded opportunities to make choices. The children approached the staff members easily for assistance.
- Children's choices were respected.
- Staff members were observed to chat at the door with parents at collection time. There was a birthday wall on display promoting a sense of identity and belonging for the children attending the service.
- The children's interests and specific routines were well documented and respected.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment available for the children. A range of play-based materials and that offered stimulation, exploration, and imaginative play was available. The play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play, and movement.
- Play material included construction areas, small world areas, play kitchen with support material, activity /manipulation toys, painting area, dress up clothes, play dough area, sand and water play.
- A range of books were available in the cozy reading area which supported children’s language and development.
- The pre-school was recently painted in brightly coloured colours and decorated with the children’s artwork. New flooring also provided a warmer ambiance to the pre-school.
- The outdoor area provided opportunities to run and explore. A range of play materials such as tractors and ride on toys are stored in a shed and taken out as required.

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 door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Accidents and incidents were recorded and documented correctly.
- First aid boxes were positioned in each room.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before snack time and following personal care.
- The standard of cleaning throughout the pre-school was satisfactory. There was evidence that daily cleaning schedules were carried out effectively.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A system was in place to record the arrival and departure times for each child attending the service on a daily basis.

(3)(a) and (b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their attendance as the inspector was requested to record her time of arrival and departure.

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) The registered provider ensured that a staff member was trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) and was present on the day of inspection.

(2) (a) A First aid box was available in each room, was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) A First aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 21/10/2023.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on the 31/08/23 and 07/07/23 respectively.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed an expiry date of 27/03/2024.