

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015CN057 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Sticky Fingers Montessori and Daycare |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Millview, Moynehall, Cavan, Co. Cavan |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | H12 D780 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Lorraine Heaslip |
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|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 05/06/2025 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 32 | PM | 17 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | S Mc Kenna  |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not Applicable |
|---------------------------------|----------------|

### Description of service

Sticky Fingers Montessori & Day Care is a privately operated Early Years' Service located in Cavan town, in operation since 1997. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to a maximum of 34 children aged from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12 midday. The service is open 47 weeks per year (closing from mid-July to late-August) operating 8am-5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 12 midday on Fridays. The childcare service comprises of two pre-school rooms, of which, the Beaver Pre-school Room is in the main building and the Raccoon Pre-school Room is in a prefabricated building to the rear of the pre-school. A Perspex enclosed play area connects the two buildings. An outdoor play area was located to the rear of the pre-school premises and consists of grass and decking area and a hard surfaced area to the front of the pre-school is also available for outdoor play and was observed in use on the day of inspection. Car parking is available for set down and collection at the front of the premises.

### Staffing

Five staff members are employed in the service including the registered provider.

### 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 may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 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 registered provider, deputy 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
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge, and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The staff files for four staff were reviewed upon the services most recent inspection on 14 February 2024 and met regulatory compliance. One staff member has been employed since, and the file was reviewed as below;

(a) (b) A total of 2 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the one new staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the one new staff member, demonstrated that they had not lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, therefore police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that one new staff member employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Two adults cared for 11 children aged 4 years 3 months to 5 years 5 months in the Beaver Room, 6 of whom attended on a part time of full day care basis.

Two adults cared for 21 children aged 3 years 3 months to 4 years 3 months in the Raccoon Room, 11 of whom attended on a part time or full day care basis.

In the afternoon both preschool rooms joined in the prefabricated building, and three adults cared for 17 children aged between 3 years 3 months to 5 years 5 months.

In addition to the above, an additional staff member was present, who carried out administration duties and covered for relief and breaks in the preschool rooms.

(8) A review of the staff rosters and the staff sign in and out records, demonstrated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

### 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:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

#### Compliance Information

A record in writing was kept of the following information:

- (h) Written records were available for review which detailed each preschool child's attendance on a daily basis.
- (i) Details of weekly staff rosters, detailing staff working hours and lunch breaks. Staff sign in and out records corresponded with the weekly staff roster.

### 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

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

##### Basic Needs

A weekly menu of hot meals provided to the children was available, the hot meals are purchased from an external catering company and reheated on site. Breakfast is provided up to 9am, and the children take in their own morning snack from home which contained a variety of sandwiches, bread rolls, cheese, yogurts and rice cakes. A rolling snack schedule where children can have their morning snack whenever they choose is in operation. The children were observed to take their time having their snacks and the staff were observed to sit with the children during the snack times, engaging in conversations and providing help where needed. The hot meal served at 12.25pm was potatoes and broccoli casserole, with an afternoon snack that's changes daily scheduled for 3.30pm approx. to include either sandwiches or crackers and fruit or yogurt.

All children in attendance were toilet trained and were observed to use the toilet independently with close adult supervision provided.

Children's appearances were cared for through the availability of aprons for messy play activities, wellies for outdoor play, tissues stations located in each care room and spare clothing was available if needed.

Rest areas are provided by soft sofas with cushions and large bean bags. The registered provider advised the inspector that no child currently in attendance sleeps. Stackable beds and bed linen are available if needed.

##### Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere in the care rooms on the day of inspection was warm and inviting, with lots of excitement as a local mobile pet farm was setting up in the area located to the front of the premises. The children could hear the animal noises and were observed to discuss with the staff and guess what animals they could hear.

There was minimal staff change-over observed, and the children displayed a strong sense of familiarity with the staff who cared for them. Opportunities for the two care rooms to play together was facilitated outside in the morning time, and again when they join daily from 12.00pm for the remainder of the day.

The children were observed to engage positively with their peers, with turn taking, sharing of toys and kind interactions observed between the children. The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour, and praise was given for positive interactions when children shared and took turns with their friends.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes and the children's individual preferences and choice during play or at meal times.

The children were beginning to prepare for Graduation, and the staff had compiled individual books of children's creative work to be sent home when they completed preschool.

Communication with parents/carers is predominantly in person at arrival and collection at the service's gates. A digital text messaging service is also used to inform parents/carers of any relevant updates.

Strong team work was evident, the staff were observed to kept each other informed of what was happening next, and both rooms were observed to work smoothly through times of transitioning for example from indoor to outdoor play times.

### **Physical And Material Environment**

The indoor care rooms were laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance. The tables and chairs were suitable for the age and stage of the children, and adult seating was also provided.

Play materials and boxes were freely available and accessible to the children on low level shelves at the children's level. The children were observed to retrieve and replace play items of interest during their day.

The display of art work on the room walls linked with the services curriculum planning, with a finger-painting lamb activity, colourful butterflies and bees, and ice-cream collages displayed along with the childrens' own individual creative pieces.

The interest areas in both preschool rooms were similar and included areas such as; well resourced home corners with role play materials and dress up clothing. A cosy book area, floor play with small world toys, table top toys such as connectors and jigsaws and creative art areas. Sensory areas which had a variety of soil, tractors, animals, lentils pasta and shredded paper were observed to be a popular choice of play in both rooms on the day of inspection. These sensory areas were created to link in with the farm theme, and the pet farm visit on the day of inspection.

The front outdoor area had a tarmac surface with a variety of ride on trucks available for use in this area. On the day of inspection this area was set up for the pet farm visit which was always supervised by the two adults from the pet farm company, who facilitated the children's turns to pet the animals. The staff members stayed with the children during these times, taking photos and using many opportunities to talk about all the animals.

The outdoor area between both care rooms was laid out similar to the indoor environments and provided a space for play outside during inclement weather conditions.

The outdoor area to the rear of the premises had a decking area with chairs and slides, bark areas with plastic and wooden play houses, wooden and plastic climbing structures with slides, tyres, see saws and a tunnel for the children's use.

A small outdoor area located between the wooden entrance gate and the rear area had space for children to take part in planting activities, and a soil fairy garden was provided for play opportunities.

### 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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- The premises were appropriately secured by a double locked wooden gate with a bell that parents/carers ring for attention of staff, this prevents a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The front outdoor area is secured by fencing, walls and a lockable gate. The rear outdoor area is secured by fencing and lockable gates.
- A visitor log is maintained, and the inspector was requested to record their attendance.
- The play equipment and toys used by the children in attendance were observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date. A detailed risk assessment for the visit from the petting farm was completed prior to the children having access to the animals. Parental consent was also available which provided parental permission for the children to pet the animals.

- The kitchen is located away from the care rooms and remained inaccessible to the children during inspection.
- Blind cords were appropriately secured.
- Floor coverings were maintained in good repair.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction throughout the inspection.

### Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated or open top bins and disposable paper towels were provided for handwashing. The children were observed to wash their hand before eating, after petting the animals and after using the toilet.
- Waste bins were stored in an area that was in accessible to children.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of openable windows or mechanical ventilation.
- Cleaning schedules were on display and completed up to date.

### Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

The food items taken in from home for the children's morning snack in both preschool rooms were observed to contain perishable items such as ham, cheese and yogurts. These food items were stored in the children's lunch boxes in the care room in the Raccoon room, and in a cooler box in the Beavers room, and not in a refrigerator at the recommended storage of 5°C or below for perishable food items.

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

### Corrective & Preventive Action

### Infection Control:

A large fridge has been installed in the communal area between both classrooms, so that Beavers and Raccoons have safe access to store their lunch boxes and retrieve them freely supporting our rolling snack system with teacher assistance. This was done immediately after inspection using a temporary extension lead from inside socket and we are waiting on our electrician to install socket beside where the fridge is positioned during our closed period.

All staff and future staff and students have/will be informed of the position and correct use of the fridge and storage of items. Supervision and checking of the fridge have been added to our weekly checklist and daily cleaning routine.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of large fridge in area located between both care rooms.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

## 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 person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. A total of 4 staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.

(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection the inspectors observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children in attendance. Headcounts were carried out during transitions from one area to another for example, before going to and coming from the outdoor play area. The staff were observed to be aware of each child's presence both in the indoor and outdoor play environments.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 34 pre-school children attending the service on a Full Day Care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.