

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DL040 |
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| Name of Service: | Little VIP's Dunkineely |
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| Address of Service: | Methodist Church, Dunkineely, Co. Donegal |
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| Eircode: | F94XCV4 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Lisa Boyle |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 11/11/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 12 | PM | - |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | L Mc Glynn |
| 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 VIP's preschool is a privately owned and operated early years' service located in the rural village of Dunkineely in south Donegal. The service is registered to provide sessional care from 9.30am to 12.30pm each weekday for children aged 2-6 years. The service operates from a church hall which consists of one large room and adjoining sanitary facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are three staff members employed to work directly with the children which includes the registered provider. The registered provider and one staff member were present on the day of inspection. One staff member was off on extended leave at the time of 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

(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

(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

(2) The vetting files for all three staff members were reviewed on this inspection and the following was deemed to meet the requirements of the regulation.

(a) (b) There were two references on file from a past employer for the three staff members.

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

(4) Documentary evidence was provided to demonstrate that the three adults had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The service had developed written policies, procedures and statements specified in schedule 5. There was evidence that policies and procedures were reviewed and updated as required. Parents were informed prior to children starting the service of how to access the policies, procedures and statements and these documents were available in the entrance hall in the service. There was evidence that relevant changes or updates to policies concerning the care of children were communicated to parents as required. There was documentary evidence of staff members having reviewed the policies and any relevant updates as they occurred.

All required policies specified in Schedule 5 were reviewed on this inspection and were deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The following is a sample of the compliance information found.

Policy on Administration of Medication:

The services policy specified the procedure for dealing with prescription medication, the administration of medication and the management of a medical emergency. Appropriate parent consent before and after the administration of medication and the procedure to be followed when a child has a fever or requires an individual care plan were all included within the policy.

Policy on Infection Control:

The policy on infection control detailed appropriate procedures to reduce the spread of infection including handwashing, nappy changing and toileting procedures, risk management in relation to infection control, the exclusion procedures and the procedure for managing outbreaks.

Policy on Managing Behaviour:

The policy included required elements such as how children’s positive social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing is supported in the service and how conflict is prevented and managed. The policy listed the types of practices that are prohibited in the service and strategies to use when dealing with behaviour incidents.

Policy on Accident and Incidents:

The policy detailed the measures that are taken within the service to minimise risk and prevent the occurrence of accidents and incidents. Appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of an accident or incident occurring were set out and detailed the requirement to review policies, procedures and practices following accidents or incidents to prevent the same or similar reoccurring.

Policy on Healthy Eating:

All food and drinks consumed by the children were brought from home therefore the policy was reflective of this. The policy detailed for parents the requirement for healthy, nutritious foods to be brought in and prohibited certain high sugar foods or foods which were deemed potential choking hazards.

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) There was an adequate number of adults employed to work directly with the children.
- (3) On the day of inspection, there were two adults caring for 12 children attending the sessional service. All children were aged 2-4 years.

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 service's healthy eating policy was observed to be implemented with children bringing healthy and nutritious snacks from home. On the morning of inspection, children were observed to enjoy a variety of sandwiches, wraps, rolls, fruit and yogurts. Lunchtime was observed to be a sociable occasion, staff members sat with children and engaged in relaxed conversation. Ample time was given for children to eat their food. Water was available in individual drinking bottles for each child. Children's independence was encouraged with staff providing support when required with opening packets or lunchboxes.

Children's developing independence and self-care skills were supported in the service. Children were supported to use the toilet independently and staff were vigilant to children's needs and remained close by to provide assistance if required. They were encouraged and assisted by the staff to wash their hands after using the toilet, prior to eating and following outdoor play. A supply of tissues was readily available at the children's level to allow them to clean their own nose.

Children's choices and preferences were observed to be respected in the service. A child led play-based ethos predominated whereby children were moving freely around the environment and select play activities of their choosing. There was ample space in the room for children to move around room, play at interest areas independently or in groups. Children also had access to the outdoor play area where they were observed on ride on toys and equipment which provided for their physical development.

Staff members were consistent and positive in guiding and managing children's prosocial behaviour. The children responded well to guidance given by the staff who modelled positive communication and interactions with each other and the children. Throughout the pre-school day the staff were alert in preventing minor disputes and supporting children to find positive solutions to problems they

encountered during their play. Children demonstrated familiarity with the routine and structure of the day and appeared to have settled in well to the rhythm of the service.

Play equipment and materials within the pre-school room were laid out to create different interest areas where resources were grouped together to support children's play-based learning. The equipment was arranged to ensure that materials and activities were positioned at the children's level facilitating easy and independent access. The layout helped to facilitate the free flow of children around the room and ease of supervision by adults. Low level tables and chairs were provided to facilitate mealtime, arts and crafts and other tabletop activities. The range of equipment and materials available in the room provided opportunities for stimulation, exploration and imaginary play.

The room was subdivided into a large area with a range of imaginary play areas and a smaller area with tabletop, sensory and more focused play activities that promoted cognitive development. The larger area contained a kitchen/home corner, small world items, a construction area, dress up items, a musical play area and baby care area. The smaller area contained tuff trays with messy play providing for children's sensory development, science/experiment items, books, puzzles peg boards, playdough and building blocks. Wall displays in the room were reflective of the interest area with images of construction work, 'baby clinic', mountain rescue and X-rays to name a few. Children's sense of identity was also promoted with various images of children at play, the family tree and artwork on display.

The outdoor area provided opportunities for gross motor development with a range of ride on toys, a small climb and slide units and a wooden bridge. There were also opportunities for children to engage in other types of play with a large water play station, mud kitchen and wooden playhouse. Children spent time outdoors on the day of inspection playing on the ride on toys and with the water station.

The inspector was informed that, on enrolment, each parent receives a welcome pack with information on the operation of the service, how to access policies and how to contact the service. A digital messaging service was used to communicate general updates and staff indicated a preference to communicate in person with parents on arrival and collection.