

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL063
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Name of Service:	Little Acorns Full Daycare
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Address of Service:	31 Cockhill Road, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 D853
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Grant
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Nexus Building, Floor 2, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	G.Fagan
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 Acorns is situated on the town of Buncrana in County Donegal. It is one of 4 services operated by the Registered Provider. The property is a single story converted domestic dwelling. There are 2 adjoining care rooms located on either side of the front hallway and wooden partitions separate the play areas. There is a kitchen, sleep room and a bathroom that also accommodates nappy changing. The outdoor space is situated at the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were 4 staff members working in the service, including the deputy person in charge. The person in charge arrived in the service shortly after the inspection commenced and the Registered Provider arrived in the afternoon.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23,24(1), 25, and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child.

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, 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)(b) The Manager of the service is the nominated person in charge and the deputy manager deputises in the managers absence. At all times there was a nominated person in charge on the premises while the inspection was being carried out.

2(a)(b) Of the 7 staff files that were reviewed, all staff had 2 validated references each.

(c) All 7 staff had Vetting disclosure documentation as issued by the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána.

(d) Of the 7 staff files reviewed, 6 staff members did not reside outside of the state for longer than 6 months therefore international police vetting was not required.

(4) There was evidence that 5 staff had evidence of holding at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) One staff member did not have enough detail on their CV to determine if international police vetting was required.

(4) While it is acknowledged that there was evidence on file to demonstrate that two adults had participated in relevant training, a certificate award in Early Childhood Care and Education was not available on the day of inspection for two staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) CV was updated to reflect locations of previous employment.

(4) Proof of qualifications were provided.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d) Up to date CV provided.

(4) Copy of DCEDIY letter and copy of certificate of qualification was provided.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) On the morning of the inspection there were 11 children aged between 1 year 11 months and 2 years 6 months being cared for by 3 adults.

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.

Compliance Information

A sample of Records of a pre-school child were reviewed for this regulation, 10 in total.

(1) Of the 10 Records reviewed, six contained all information relation to (a) to (i)

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) One record did not contain the date on which the child first attended the service.

(e) One record did not contain the authorised person's name or phone number.

(g) One record did not contain the telephone number of the child's registered practitioner.

(i) Two records did not confirm whether medical treatment in the event of an emergency could be given if required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)(e)(g)(i) Records relating to the pre-school children were completed in full.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)(e)(g)(i) Copies of the completed records were provided.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 15 have been adequately addressed.

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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (h) An accurate record of the pre-school children attending was available for inspection.
- (i) Evidence was provided that a weekly staff roster is in place, and this aligned with the staff sign in sheet and the staff attendance on the day of inspection.
- (k) The accident incident book had 13 reports of accident/incidents. Each form recorded relevant details relating to any accident/ incident and were signed by staff and the parent/guardian.

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 were an adequate number of tables and chairs in the care rooms and were of a suitable height for the age and stage of development for the children attending the service.

- The garden area to the back of the premises had a variety of equipment and materials suitable for play, such as a tuff tray with dried pasta, small diggers and shovels, tyres and logs, ride on toys, a small slide, climbing bridge, balls, trikes and push bikes.
- The cabin at the back of the garden had a bench seating area, construction toys, play kitchen toys and a wobble board.
- There was a fully stocked art and crafts cupboard available containing, chalk, glitter, cotton wool, crayons, paint, paper etc.
- There were clearly defined areas such as the kitchen corner, dress up area, construction area.
- The hall area had a large storage unit which stored magnets, blocks, farm toys, pop-its, stacking blocks.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Meal times were observed to be a social event with children sitting at the tables and the staff engaging with the children during meal times.
- Food served to the children in the service is provided by the parents. A fridge is available in the larger care room to store the food. Food was in a bag and labelled for each child.
- Water was available for the children in water bottle provided from home.
- Of the 5 children who were scheduled to stay for more than 5 hours on the day of inspection 2 children had a hot meal available in the fridge.

Non-Compliance Information

1. 3 children were scheduled to stay for more than 5 hours on the day of inspection did not have access to a hot meal. Upon discussion with the person In charge, a hot meal was not available on the premises for these children. Upon discussion with the person in charge and review of documentation, it is acknowledged that the Registered provider has requested the parents provide hot food, however the

messaging to parents in the welcome letter or the service policy is not clear that a hot meal must be provided if the child remains in the service for more than 5 hours.

2. There was limited alternative food available on the premises on the day of inspection. Upon discussion with staff, flavoured rice cakes and dried pasta were the only food items available. Alternative and adequate suitable food should be available should it be required.

Non-compliances relating to hot food not being provided for children attending the service for more than 5 hours, or food not being available on the premises for children who may require additional or alternative food was raised during the 2022 and 2023 inspections.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Parents have been contacted to explain the requirement to provide a hot meal should a child remain in the services for 5 hours or more.

Food list has been added to the Kitchen's weekly cleaning checklist. Food stock will be checked weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated enrolment pack and updated policy to reflect the changes were provided
Kitchen checklist provided.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 22 have been adequately addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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:

- Gates and doors to access the premises and garden space were secured appropriately.
- Rooms within the premises that were not accessible to children, for example the kitchen and adult toilet/store room had secure locks to prevent children accessing them.

Infection Control:

- Waterproof mattresses were present in all three cots.
- A cleaning schedule for bed linen was observed in the sleep room.

Safe Sleep:

- The designated sleep room consisted of 3 standard cots were provided in the sleep room and each cot had a suitable sized mattress.
- There were also stackable beds available for colder children.
- A child, over the age of 15 months was observed being put to sleep in a cot and a light blanket was provided.
- 10-minute sleep checks were observed when a child was sleeping in the cot. These sleep checks were recorded in an app.
- A staff member remained with children when they were napping on stackable beds.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Stackable beds were propped up against an unused cot while a child was sleeping in a nearby cot. Storage of the stackable beds was unsafe.
2. Two cots are situated against a fully stocked storage unit that accommodates additional toys and materials. This unit is covered by a curtain. Young children using the cots have full access to the toys and equipment.

Infection Control:

3. Storage of children's individual sheets and blankets were not suitable to prevent cross contamination. Sheets and blankets were stacked on top of one another on a storage shelf that was accessible to children using one of the cots.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Storage area has been created to store stackable beds.
2. Curtains have been replaced with doors so children cannot access toys and materials from the cot.

Infection Control:

3. Bed linen is stored in individual baskets with the child's name on each basket.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Evidence of new storage area provided.
2. Evidence of cupboard doors being installed provided

Infection Control:

3. Evidence of new labelled baskets provided.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

- The signing in and out of children was accurately recorded on the sign in/out sheets.

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

- Four staff members, including the person in charge have First Aid Responder (FAR) training that is in date. Upon review of the staff roster, a FAR trained staff member was available to the children at all times for the duration of the opening hours of the service.

- A fully stocked First Aid box is available in a conspicuous position and out of reach of the children was available if required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The preschool service had an insurance certificate available stating

- The contact details of the insurance provider,
- The name and address of the service insured,
- The categories of insurance cover for the service,
- The number of children covered by insurance within the service and,
- The start date and end date of the insurance cover.

Non-Compliance Information

1. While it is acknowledged that the insurance provides cover for public liability, fire and theft. upon review of the insurance cover and discussion with the Registered Provider, the service is not covered for building insurance. Having adequate insurance cover is required to ensure the service is protected should an incident arise.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Building insurance provided.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence that building is insured, and a copy of this insurance will be on file in the service for inspection.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 28 has been adequately addressed.