

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015DL070

Name of Service Little Learners Pre-school

Address of Service: The Cairn,
Drumaweir,
Greencastle, Donegal

Email Address: cavclaire@hotmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Claire Norris

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	√	Part-Time		Sessional	
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary	

Proposed change:	The service is proposing to change their service type from sessional to full day care and change their hours of operation from 9.15am-1.00pm to 8.30-5.00pm.
Proposed Number of Children:	44
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	Full Day Care 08:30 – 17:00
Registered change:	Full Day Care 08:30 – 17:00

Date of Inspection:	2	1	0	4	2	0	2	3
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Inspection undertaken by: L Mc Glynn

Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: Donegal Early Years Inspectorate,
St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94

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Rationale for Inspection:

Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Full Day Care 08:30 – 17:00, 44 Sessional/19 Full Day Care Children
Date of Registration	18 th September 2023

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Little Learners Pre-school is a privately owned and operated service proposing to provide sessional part time and full day care to children aged 2-6 years. The service will operate from 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday with a sessional service from 9.15am-12.15pm.
Premises	The premises consists of a single-story building previously operated as a visitor's centre in the townland of Drumaweir on the outskirts of the town of Greencastle in County Donegal. There are two playrooms in the building as well as an office and sanitary facilities. A secure outdoor play area for the children extends outwards from the front of the building.
Staffing	There is a total of five adults employed within the service which includes the registered provider. All five adults will work directly with the children and hold the required Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) minimum Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent.
Methodology	The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services)

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	<p>(Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	<p>The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider who was present on the day of the inspection.</p>

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment	
<p>(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.</p>	
Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met. The registered provider is the designated person in charge of the daily operation of the service. A second adult working with children attending the pre-school service has been designated as the named person to deputise in the event of the registered provider’s absence.</p>

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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.*

Requirement met:

The requirements of this regulation have been met.

(1) The registered provider proposes to accommodate a maximum of 44 children ranging in age from 2 to 6 years attending the pre-school service on a sessional basis and 19 children on a full or part-time day care basis. Inclusive of the registered provider, there are five named adults employed to care for the children which is an adequate provision in line with the minimum ratio of adults to children specified by this regulation.

(2) The registered provider is aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 2 of Schedule 6 and will ensure that an adequate number of adults will at all times work directly with the number of children attending the service on a part-time or full day care basis.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) *Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—*
- (a) *having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
 - (b) *there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (2) *A registered provider—*
- (b) *of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

Requirement met:

The findings documented relate to an assessment of one of the two preschool rooms that will be used to provide the full day care service. The second room used solely for the purposes of sessional care was not included as it was not subject to change as part of this application.

(1)(a)

There was adequate and suitable indoor play facilities in place for the age range of children proposed to be catered for. One large playroom was assigned for use by children attending the full or part-time day care service. This room presented as a bright and visually appealing space and was resourced with a range of play materials and equipment laid out in defined interest areas to facilitate meaningful play activities. Interest areas included spaces for painting and art with low-level drawers containing a range of materials to support children’s mark making and creative expression such as crayons, pencils and junk art resources. Child height shelving and storage units

contained a range of resources to support children’s cognitive development and fine motor skills such as jigsaws, puzzles, connectors and peg boards. Large boxes contained additional play resources such as plastic blocks, wooden bricks, small animals and farm play items to name a few. A section of the room was designated for use as a home/kitchen area and contained a range of both plastic and real-world items to support children’s play in this area. A carpeted area with floor cushions in the room was set out to provide a reading space for children with a range of developmentally appropriate reading materials. Other interest areas and resources within the room included a doll and baby care area, manipulative play materials and imaginary play resources. Low level tables and chairs were available to both support children’s play and provide appropriate seating for mealtimes.

(1)(b)

There were adequate rest facilities available. Two stackable floor beds were provided. There was also a supply of soft blankets that could be used by the children to rest or relax during the day.

(2) (a) and (b) Children attending the service had access to a large play area outdoors which extended out from the front of the building and was subdivided into distinct interest areas. A sloping pathway and steps connected the three areas providing easy access for children. The area immediately outside the room consisted of all-weather synthetic grass ground covering and housed transient play resources such as plastic blocks and rocker boats. The next area consisted of small gravel ground covering and contained a wooden low-level climb and slide frame which included a play hut and upper walkway, two low level swings and sit on tyres. The bottom section was covered in a mix of small gravel and concrete ground surfacing and contained a large wooden boat, large digging areas and a wooden shelter for all weather play. A range of ride on toys and vehicles were available on the section with concrete ground covering to support gross motor development through cycling, running and ball play. The entire area was enclosed with mid height wooden fencing.

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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.

<p>Requirement met:</p>	<p>The following arrangements were in place to meet the regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Children’s main meal are to be provided by an outside caterer. Children will bring their morning and afternoon snack from home. A sample menu for the main meal was furnished which demonstrated a good variety of nutritional foods. The menu is to be periodically reviewed and updated.</p> <p>A small kitchen area was provided in the room. This contained a fridge for storing perishable foods. A referral was made to the office of environmental health following the inspection to ensure compliance with food hygiene regulations.</p> <p>The premises is connected to the main public water system. Drinks provided are to include whole milk or water.</p>
<p>Requirement not met:</p>	<p>An updated healthy eating policy was not available to reflect the change in service type. This is to include specific information for parents on the arrangement in place to provide meals for children in the service and guidance for parents on the quantity and types of food to provide from home for morning and afternoon snacks.</p>
<p>Response from Provider:</p>	<p>After the inspection, the registered provider submitted a healthy eating policy reflecting the change in service type. This policy provides information to parents of the arrangements of food provision and includes guidance on food provision from home.</p>
<p>Summary Comment:</p>	<p>On review of the information submitted to the inspectorate after the inspection, this requirement is now met.</p>

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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.

Requirement met:

The following safety provisions were noted to be in place on the day of inspection:

- The main entrance into the premises was safely secured preventing children exiting unsupervised or persons gaining unauthorised entry. The perimeter of the outdoor play area was fully enclosed by stone walls and fencing which incorporated gates with closing mechanisms.
- The emergency evacuation route from the pre-school room was identified by illuminated emergency exit signage. All designated emergency exits were observed to be clear and unobstructed.
- Internal doors and the kitchen area was appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas or hazardous items.
- All toys and play resources available on the day of inspection were noted to be clean, in good repair and appropriate for the age range of children proposed to attend the service.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the pre-school room and sanitary facilities. The service’s central waste storage facilities were out of reach of children in an outside area that was inaccessible to the children from their outdoor play area.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the service’s sanitary accommodation.
- A refrigerator was available to facilitate the safe storage of perishable food items brought from home and a sink was available in the room to support staff to engage in effective hygiene practices.

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- The registered provider confirmed that daily inspection and risk assessment of indoor and outdoor play environments take place in the service to monitor and prevent against rodent activity.
- Templates for recording daily cleaning activities were available and displayed in the premises to help ensure that regular cleaning was carried out and documented.
- Window blind cords were secured.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The service provided documentary evidence to demonstrate that staff members had completed training in first aid for children (FAR).

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position in the room. This was easily accessible to the staff should a child who they were caring for in the service require first aid treatment.

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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 firefighting 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.

Requirement met:	The requirements of this regulation were partially met. (1)(a) There was a written record of fire drills that had taken place with the children which were detailed monthly. (b) There was documentation detailing the number and type of the firefighting equipment in the building. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in August 2022. (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the preschool rooms.
Requirement not met:	An up to date record detailing the maintenance and testing of the smoke alarms was not available to view.
Response from Provider:	The registered provider submitted details of the maintenance and testing of the smoke alarms after the inspection.
Summary Comment:	On review of documentation submitted to the inspectorate after inspection, this requirement is now met.

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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:

An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to this inspection. The Registered Provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered providers compliance with Regulation 28.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

- On visual inspection, the pre-school room and wider premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure with no visible defects apparent. The registered provider confirmed that they had no knowledge of any structural issues with the building.
- Natural light was provided in the room with glass panel windows. Additional artificial lighting in the pre-school room was provided by ceiling mounted fluorescent lighting units with protective diffusers.
- The building was heated by an oil-fired central heating system. The air temperature within the pre-school room was maintained within

recommended range of 18°C to 22°C during the inspection. In the pre-school room, natural ventilation was supplied via openable windows and there was no evidence of condensation or mould growth noted during the inspection. The sanitary accommodation in the pre-school was ventilated by means of mechanical ventilation.

- The premises, its play equipment and materials were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition with documented cleaning records on display within the premises.
- There was sufficient sanitary accommodation available for the maximum number of 19 children attending on a part-time or full day care basis which the service is proposing to cater for. The room contained three toilets with three associated wash hand basins, one of which could be used for staff if required. An additional toilet for staff use was located in the adjacent room. One nappy changing unit was available in the toilet area and the registered provider agreed to relocate this to within a cubicle to protect the dignity of the child being changed.
- Wash hand basins were provided with an adequate supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Requirement met:

The requirement for this regulation has been met.

Adequate clear floor space is provided in the proposed pre-school rooms for the work, play and movement of the 19 children that it is proposed to accommodate. The clear floor space in the room measured 45.69m². This meets the space requirements for the proposed number of 22 pre-school children attending to avail of the service’s sessional childcare provision and 19 children attending on a full or part time basis.