

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR015
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Name of Service:	Little Maples Creche & Pre-school
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Address of Service:	1 Maple Manor, Johnstown Road, Cabinteely, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 N523
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynn Ruddle
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern & S. Quigley
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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 Maples Crèche & Pre-school offers full day care to children aged 0-6 years. The service operates from the ground floor of a purposely adapted detached house in a residential area of Cabinteely. There are three childcare rooms in the service, two sleep rooms and two outdoor areas. The service opens Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm.

Staffing

There are 10 staff members employed to work in the service including the person in charge. There were 9 staff present on the day 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child and regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The scope of the inspection under these regulations included the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. The scope of the inspection under regulation 23 - Safe Sleep included the Wobbler room.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, staff and person in charge 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*

(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 person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) References had been appropriately considered for six staff members. A minimum of two references had been sourced from their past employers. A second reference from a reputable source had been sourced for staff who had only one previous employer. Records were available of the verification checks that had been carried out.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived abroad as adults for more than six consecutive months.
- (4) Eight staff members held awards in Early childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) It was not evident that past employer references had been appropriately considered for four staff members. No references had been sourced from the previous employers of one staff member. A second reference had not been sourced from the previous employers of three staff members.
- (4) There were no records to evidence that two of the adults working directly with children held awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) All references will be validated. All staff members paperwork will be completed prior to their starting date.

(4) One adult has one module left to complete the Level 5 award. The second adult will register on a course. When hiring new staff, effort must be taken in ensuring the staff has the relevant qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

9(2)(a)

Adult 1: One past employer reference. One character reference.

Adult 2: One past employer reference with a record of verification.

Adult 3: Email stating the staff member has ceased employment.

Adult 4: One character reference.

Regulation 9(4)

No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

(2)(a) Character references were submitted instead of a second past employer reference for two staff members. Both staff members had more than one previous employer. The registered provider must only consider references from reputable sources where the person has no past employers. The only past employer reference submitted for one of these staff members did not include a record of verification. The regulatory requirement has not been met.

(4) Two adults working directly with the children do not hold the minimum required qualification. The regulatory requirement has not been met.

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. There were 9 adults working with 35 children.

(2) At all times the minimum required ratio of adults to children was maintained.

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-

(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

(1)(b) Snacks and meals were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and were offered with meals and snacks. Staff supported the children to manage their personal care. They provided bibs to protect the children's clothes from becoming wet or soiled when eating. Children's nappies were changed routinely and in between when required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. An app was used to communicate with parents/guardians in relation to the individual children's care. This included information relating to diet, sleep, and nappy-changes. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children through use of soft and gentle tones.

An area was provided with matting and cushions within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Children attending the Wobbler room were facilitated to sleep according to their individual routines. The children attending the Toddler room were provided with an opportunity to sleep after dinner. Staff told the inspectors that they provide for the children to sleep outside of these times if they show signs of tiredness. The children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their outer clothing and providing soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff sitting with the children and soothing them as needed during this time.

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

The registered provider had taken measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children as outlined in the examples below:

General Safety:

- Entrances/exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child leaving unsupervised.
- Children's attendance was recorded accurately for reference in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Cables and blind cords were secured out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

- Sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels for handwashing.
- Children's hands were washed prior to eating to help prevent the spread of infection.
- The Pre-school rooms and sanitary facilities were observed to be in a clean condition.
- Pedal operated, lidded bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.

Safe Sleep:

- Children slept in standard cots appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Children's outer clothing was removed to reduce the risk of overheating.
- Cot mattresses and linens were fitted appropriately.
- Breathable blankets were used, and the room temperature was maintained between 16-20°C when children were sleeping to reduce the risk of overheating.
- Staff demonstrated a good understanding of guidelines to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome including placing infants to sleep on their back.
- Staff checked the sleeping children every ten minutes and made a record of the checks.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

It was not evident that the service could provide appropriate care to a child who may require emergency medication. The service held injectable medication for a child, to be given in the event of severe allergic reaction. There was no record of parental/guardian consent to administer the medication. The service had no documented care plan in place outlining the signs of the reaction or how to manage this if required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

Action plan containing exact description of when and how to use the adrenaline pen. Parents approved and signed the document. Action plan template ready in place, in a case of new children that require an adrenaline pen. All staff members trained in use of an adrenaline pen.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Copy of action plan.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

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) Two staff had current certificates in first aid training for children. At least one trained staff member was always available to the children.

(2)(a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position.

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) Records were available of fire-drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated December 2023.

(b) Records were available demonstrating the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced in January and March 2023 respectively.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were clearly displayed.