

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR052
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Name of Service:	Giant Steps
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Address of Service:	85 Mount Eagle View, Leopardstown Heights, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 Y4T8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eimear MacEntee
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Giant Steps is a private early years service which is located in a residential area of Leopardstown, South County Dublin. The early years service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme on a sessional basis to pre-school children aged 2 - 6years. The programme of care is facilitated through a play-based curriculum. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 12:30 each weekday on a school calendar basis. Giant Steps operates from a purpose-built premises to the rear of the registered provider's own home and consists of one care room and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor play area is available to the children on the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs two staff members, including the registered provider who works directly in the service. On the day of inspection, both adults were present.

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/ information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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*
- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

No new adults had been employed to work in the service since the last date of inspection on the 21st May 2021.

The requirements for Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) were met during the last inspection of the service in respect of the registered provider and the other adult currently employed in the service. Therefore, the inspection of Regulation 9 was limited to the requirements detailed in 9(2)(c), the findings were as follows:

- Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the two adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(3)
The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were sixteen children present in the service being supervised by two adults during the inspection.

(8)(c)
Not applicable, the registered provider does not operate the service single handedly.

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

1)
A sample of documentation was reviewed by the inspector in respect of twelve children in attendance to assess compliance relating to the records of preschool children maintained in the service. The sample of documentation reviewed evidenced that records were kept in writing in respect of pre-school children attending the service detailing the information outlined under Regulation 15(1)(a) to (g).

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
The sample of documentation reviewed evidenced that some records were not routinely kept in writing in respect of pre-school children attending the service detailing the information outlined under Regulation 15(1) as follows:
(h) (i) Records of immunisations received and written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency were not available for one of the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Form has now been completed and signed by the parent. Registrations are routinely examined on receipt. It has now been diarised to recheck all registrations before the commencement of each school academic year for omissions and signatures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A record was available in the care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that attendance records had been maintained daily in the service.
 - (i) An accurate record was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member in the service.
 - (j) There were no written records of administration of medication available in the service. The registered provider stated medication had not been administered to a child in recent years and is not typically administered in the service. However, the necessary documentation was available to record the administration of medications if required.
 - (k) There were no records of accidents or incidents which had occurred in the service available. The registered provider stated no accidents or incidents had occurred in the service in recent years. However, appropriate documentation was available to record any accidents or incidents that may occur in the service.

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

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff stated that lunch is provided daily by the parents or guardians of the children in attendance. Drinks of water were accessible to the children at all times. Children were encouraged to assist in the preparation for lunch and snack time, handing out lunch bags to their peers. Staff members sat with the children chatting during mealtime. Older children accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required.

Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspector. Adults made time for individual conversations with the children and communicated well, listening and making eye contact. Staff were both observed to have a supportive role in the children's activities, engaging to extend activities and create a language rich environment. Children were afforded choice during their morning play based activities and chose materials from open shelving units which were all accessible at their level. The children appeared happy and content throughout the inspection.

Children were encouraged to be independent in caring for their environment, tidying up materials after play. Staff supported the children to wash their hands including before meals and after toileting. A rest area was available in the care rooms so children could take time away from the group or rest if required.

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 inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Pedal-operated, lidded bins were in place throughout the service to appropriately manage waste. Staff supported children to wash their hands after using the toilet, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of temperature reducing medication, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The temperature of a portable heater in the care room was recorded to be 82°Celsius on the day of inspection. The radiator was uncovered at a low level and accessible to the children posing a risk of a burn injury to a child. It is acknowledged the heater was plugged out to eliminate the risk once the inspector brought this to the providers attention.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing mat in use in the service had a fabric cover over it which a staff member reported is washed at the end of each day. The fabric could not be appropriately cleaned and wiped down after each nappy change posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The school heating is activated daily approximately 90 minutes before the arrival of the children. The heating is then regulated to a safe and comfortable temperature on arrival of staff and before the arrival of the children. The service are satisfied that the high temperature of the heater was a singular omission and both staff members have undertaken to check same daily before opening. The practice now will be that the second arriving staff member (just before 9.00am) will ensure the temperature of the heaters is at a safe comfortable level and the portable heater will be placed at a location in the room not accessible.

Infection Control:

The fabric cover on the nappy changing unit has been permanently removed. Signage has been erected beside the changing unit as a reminder off the cleaning requirement with suitable cleaning materials available in the immediate vicinity.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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)

A person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and

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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place in December 2024.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced within the required timeframe.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within each room in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the service was appropriately insured for the type of service provision and the number of children enrolled in the service.