

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS111
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Gems Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Suaimhneas, Commons Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D22 E8H4
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Fiona Timmons
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/11/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	42	PM	25
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H Sutherland, S Quigley
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Gems Childcare is a private service located in an urban setting in Clondalkin, Dublin 22. The service provides full-time, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years from 7.30 am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. The sessional service runs from 9.15am –12.15pm. The service operates from a purposefully adapted two-story building and has five care rooms. Four of the care rooms are situated in the main building and a fifth room is located to the rear of the property. A large enclosed outdoor play area is available to the children to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider currently employs 18 adults including a manager and a cook. On the day of inspection there were 13 adults present working directly with the children. The service manager and two students on work placement programmes were also present. The registered provider was not present during the inspection and does not work in the service.

### 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, safety and records. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.*

*(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

(1)

- (a) There was a person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service which was confirmed with staff during conversations with inspector and documentation on display in the service.

(2) Following discussions with person in charge it was confirmed that five adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 30 January 2024. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed for the five adults and 9 (2), (3) was reviewed for the two students on work placement programmes. The requirements of Regulation 9 (2) (c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all staff members.

(2)

- (a) Eight written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 20 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the early years inspectorate regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Documentation was available to show that four of the adults who worked directly with the children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children Disability and Equality (DCDE).

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b)
- There were no written and validated references available for two adults who had recently begun working in the service.
  - Documentary evidence indicated that two adults did not have their second reference validated.
- (d) Police vetting was not available for two adults who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as adults.
- (3) Documentation reviewed provided evidence that the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had not been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service, as detailed above under (2)(a)(b) and as follows:
- Two adults commenced employment without having their second references validated.
  - There were no written and validated references available for two adults.
  - Validation of the second references for two staff members was completed after they had begun working in the service.
  - Documentary evidence indicated one adult had commenced employment in the service prior to receipt of Garda vetting.
  - Police vetting was not obtained for two adults working directly with the children.
- (4) One adult employed to work directly with the children did not hold the minimum required qualification.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) (b)
- The registered provider has confirmed that both adults are no longer working in the service.
  - Validation of references has been obtained for the two adults.
- Going forward, yearly audits will be carried out on all staff files. The manager and assistant manager will verify that a file is complete prior to filing it away when a new staff member is employed.
- (d) Police vetting has been obtained for one of the adults. The second adult will not work in the service until Police vetting is available. A meeting was held with management to ensure that, in future, all required paperwork is made available for any adult commencing work in the service.
- (3) Going forward visual aids will be used to signal any incomplete sections of the HR files, and management will ensure all adults have a complete file before they commence work in the service.

(4) The adult has submitted all of their modules for QQI evaluation, is awaiting their results, and will only work in the school age service until the required qualification has been obtained. In future, only fully qualified staff will be offered employment in Little Gems Childcare.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(a), (b), (d), (3), (4) has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has 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) On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs.
- (2) The minimum adult-to-child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection. There were 13 adults available to 42 children in the morning and eight adults available to 25 children in the afternoon.

### 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

#### Compliance Information

During the inspection, the inspectors observed that measures were in place to support children's learning and development, having regard to their age and stage of development. During discussions with the inspector, staff advised that the service provides breakfast, a snack, a hot dinner, and tea for children attending on a full-time basis, while parents provide lunch for children attending on a sessional basis. The inspectors observed children eating toast followed by watermelon in the morning, and chicken, peas, and mashed potatoes for dinner. Self-feeding was encouraged, and staff promptly offered support when required. Alternative options were offered to children who refused to eat the meals. Drinking water was readily available and offered to children with their meals.

The service was observed to operate flexible nappy changing routines, and staff were attentive and supportive to children during this time. Staff encouraged and supported children to wash their hands at regular intervals during the inspection, promoting the development of children's self-care skills. For example, children were observed washing their hands after nappy changing, after using the toilet, prior to meals, and following outdoor play. Staff were observed to understand children's need to be active, and children moved freely and confidently around their environment. Sleep in the baby room was observed to be needs-led, while older children had the opportunity to sleep at a designated time after lunch. Staff provided comfort and reassurance to children during this time. Rest areas were available for older children to take a break from activities if needed. Most of the children were observed to have the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection and were appropriately dressed for the weather.

Staff were observed sitting with children during mealtimes and activities, engaging warmly with them. Individual books were in use in the younger care rooms, where staff documented key aspects of the children's day and reported that this information was provided to parents when they arrived to collect their child.

The care rooms were laid out to support independence and allow for both individual and group activities. Age-appropriate resources and materials were available to support children's learning. For example, role play areas such as home corners, dress-up and shops, construction, small world play, mark making, musical instruments, and tuff trays for sensory play. Family photographs were on display in each care room, supporting children's sense of

identity and belonging. Opportunities were provided for children to enjoy storytelling, dancing, and singing. Staff in the Toddler room were observed using props during story time to support children's participation.

### Non-Compliance Information

During the inspection, it was observed that at 12.10pm, during the transition from the outdoor area to the care room, three children had their outer clothing removed and were left wearing only their vests. The external door to the care room remained for the duration of this period. Children were seated at tables positioned next to the open doorway, which was not closed until 12.18pm. This practice compromised the health and wellbeing of the children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The care room has been rearranged, and the tables are no longer positioned near the doors or windows. Children will remain fully dressed for mealtimes going forward. The temperature of the room will be considered when removing children's outer clothing in preparation for sleep. In addition, a meeting was held with staff to discuss transitions from outdoors to indoors, mealtimes, sleep time preparation, and Tusla guidance on keeping children safe and comfortable indoors and outdoors in all weathers.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 (1) (a) has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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:

- The service was secured with keypad entry, preventing unauthorised access and ensuring children could not leave the premises unsupervised.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- Flexes and cables were in good condition and positioned out of children's reach.

- All toys and equipment observed on the day of inspection were in good condition and free from any pinch or crush points.

### Infection Control:

- Staff supported children to wash their hands following outdoor play, nappy changing, after using the toilet and prior to eating their meals.
- The care rooms were observed to be clean and well maintained.
- Waste was disposed of in pedal -operated bins.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children requiring sleep.
- Soothers used by the children were sterilised daily and stored individually.

### Administration of Medication:

- Staff clearly demonstrated the procedure to administer prescribed medication to children.
- Records for the administration of medication were available for use when required.

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed carrying out checks on sleeping children every ten minutes, documenting their breathing pattern, room temperature, skin colour, and sleeping position.
- The recommended sleep temperatures were maintained in the rooms where children slept.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were free from obstruction.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. Safety measures had not been implemented for the windows in the Toddler room. It was observed that the window did not have restrictors fitted, posing a safety risk to children.

### Safe Sleep:

2. The bed provided for one of the children did not meet safe sleep requirements for the child's age. A child under the age of two was observed sleeping on a low-level stackable bed. This practice poses a risk to the child's safety and does not align with current safe sleep guidance. The inspectors acknowledge that a sleep plan was available for the child.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. New window restrictor locks have been purchased and installed on the Toddler room window. Going forward, risk assessments will be carried out to monitor the maintenance of the locks.

##### Safe Sleep:

2. The registered provider has purchased age-appropriate beds, and a room meeting was held to review the safe sleep policy. Policies will be reviewed at staff meetings going forward to ensure all staff are reminded of the policy requirements.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

##### Safe Sleep:

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.

### 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*

*(3) 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 took place on 14 October 2025.
  - (b) The number, type, and maintenance records of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises were up to date. Firefighting equipment was serviced on 11 January 2025 and smoke alarms were serviced on 10 September 2025.
- (2)
- (a) The above records were made available on inspection.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the care rooms and the main hallway 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 confirmed that the service is adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance. The service is insured for 60 children and the certificate is valid until 27 March 2026.