

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS213
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Name of Service:	Learning For Life
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Address of Service:	DTTLB Campus, Esker Hill, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 K120
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead McCarville
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	40	PM	40
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and S Quigley
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Learning for Life is a full day care service which is located in Lucan, Co. Dublin. Education and care are provided to children aged between 0-6 years and the service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:00 and 18:30 hours. The service currently operates from three classrooms, two located on the ground floor and one located on the first floor of the service. An additional room is in use as an activity room which staff reported children use during the day for alternative activities. There are three separate enclosed outdoor play areas to the front of the building. Two are accessible directly from the Challengers and the Seekers room and an additional large area is available outside of these areas.

This service is one of three services operated by the registered providers.

Staffing

The service was staffed by eight staff members who worked directly with the children in the morning and ten staff members in the afternoon. The centre manager and registered provider were also present during the inspection. In the afternoon three staff members from one of the other services operated by the registered providers arrived to provide care to the children.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 26 and 32. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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

(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

Documentation was assessed under Regulation 9 for three adults who were employed to work in the service since the last inspection dated 25th October 2023. Garda vetting records were reviewed in respect of all adults to determine compliance with Regulatory notice which states the requirement to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(2)

(a)(b) Five references from a past employer and one from a source other than a past employer were sought and verified for the three adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults.

Three vetting disclosures had not been renewed within the last three years. This will be reported under Regulation 23.

(d)

Two adults had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult. International Police vetting was available for both adults.

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were completed prior to the three staff members commencing in the service.

(4)

All three of the staff members held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework

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) There were eight staff allocated to work directly with the children in the morning and ten staff in the afternoon. The registered provider and centre manager were available to help and provide cover for staff breaks. An adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in all rooms in the service.

(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-

(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, and

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. The service provided breakfast, a hot meal, and an afternoon tea to the children. All children were supported to eat independently during meals, and staff provided assistance to children where required. Bibs were worn in younger care rooms to protect the children's clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating. Drinking water was available in the care rooms at all times.

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection. Staff supported the children to wash their hands and clean their faces at appropriate times throughout the inspection. Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during

the procedure. Children were observed using the toilet independently and assistance was offered by staff when required.

The rooms had clearly defined interest areas such as home corner, construction area, art area and book corner, with soft mats and cushions. The service also had materials from the Montessori method of education available for use. Children's artwork was displayed on the walls together with family photos and educational posters. The play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led. Children were observed exploring their environment, engaged in activities and playing with each other and the staff. Due to the favourable weather children in all rooms spent most of the morning engaging in outdoor play. Staff supported children during some activities including sand play, water play and arts and crafts activities whilst outdoors. The outdoor area had recently been developed and included new play equipment that encouraged the development of gross motor and imaginative play.

An emergent curriculum was evident in the service. Children's interests were clearly incorporated into the activities and interest areas.

Staff used respectful language during interactions with the children demonstrating warmth and sensitivity and supported children in finding practical solutions to solve minor conflicts with peers.

Children in the Challengers room had a designated sleep time but a separate sleep room was available should a child need to sleep outside of this time.

Non-Compliance Information

1. During discussions with staff it was established that a travel cot was in use in the Challengers room to place children in to manage behaviours until other staff members were available. This was at variance with the Behaviour Management Policy in the service.

It is acknowledged that once this was brought to the registered providers attention that the cot was removed from the room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The travel cot was removed from the room and disposed of while the inspectors were present. Staff have been referred to the behaviour management policy and there is no longer a travel cot in the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photo of travel cot removed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents have been reviewed and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 19.

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 inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken 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 accessing the service 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 materials were stored out of reach of children. Heavy furniture was secured, and cables were out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before meals. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. A number of medication records were reviewed and they contained all the information required. Detailed care plans were in place for children who required emergency medication and staff were aware of the steps to follow should such medication be required.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs were maintained in all rooms where children slept, children who were aged 2 years were facilitated to sleep on low level beds.

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. While Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff, three were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Safe Sleep:

2. A child aged 1 year was observed sleeping in a travel cot in the sleep room. A standard cot is required for all children sleeping aged 1 year. This is at variance with the Safe Sleep Policy of the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for the 3 staff in question has been sought and received. A record of the dates when vetting expires has been compiled and will be regularly checked by management.

Safe Sleep:

2. The travel cot has been removed from the sleep room and the child has been allocated a cot. All children under two years of age will be allocated a cot.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copies of updated vetting submitted.

Safe Sleep:

2. Photos of the cot room.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents have been reviewed and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(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

(4)

A notice of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency were displayed in each care room and the common areas throughout the service.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
- (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-

- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
- (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
The complaints policy of the service contained the information detailed in (a), (b) and (c) of the above Regulation.
- (2) A record in writing was kept in regards to a complaint received by the service. The service followed the steps detailed in their policy when addressing the complaint received.
- (3)
(a)(b) A record in writing was available for inspection which detailed the nature of the complaint, how it was dealt with and it was open to inspection on the day of inspection.