

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY028
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Name of Service:	Little Stars Creche
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Address of Service:	116 North King Street, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Denise Cunningham
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	03/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Second Floor, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne and E Hosford
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 Stars Creche, located in Dublin 7, is a community service which has been in operation since 2005. It offers full day care, part-time and sessional childcare to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age from 9.00am to 4.00pm. It consists of one large room subdivided into two separate areas; the first area caters for the Baby room for children aged 1 – 2 years and the second area caters jointly for the Toddler room for children aged 2 – 3 years and the Preschool room for children aged 3 – 5 years. Both areas were in use on the day of inspection. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service employs ten staff to work in the service to include the registered provider who is the service manager, four childcare staff, two staff employed under the Access Inclusion Model (AIM) and two staff employed under a Community Employment (CE) scheme, and a cook. On the day of Inspection, nine staff were present to include the registered provider, three childcare staff, two staff employed under the Access inclusion Model and two staff employed under the Community Employment Scheme and an auxiliary staff member as the cook.

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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, and 32.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 10 Policies and Procedures of a Preschool service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to Preschool service (j), (k), Regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of the child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

The scope of the inspection included all three care rooms.

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, 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.

(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 registered provider ensured there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider and the designated person in charge were on the premises when the inspector's arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) It was confirmed by the registered provider that no new staff members have been employed in the service since the last inspection on the 31 May 2024. Garda Vetting disclosure for one staff member whose file was reviewed on the last inspection was reviewed on this inspection.

(a) (b) Not applicable.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the one adult. The service had adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable

(4) Not applicable

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

On review of the policies made available on the day of inspection, it was observed that they did not include the following information. For example:

Healthy Eating Policy –

The policy did not state that:

- An alternative healthy option would be provided in the event a child requests it or that additional food would be available at mealtimes or between meals if required.
- Staff would be informed and given information regarding any specific dietary requirements of a child.
- The service would engage and work in collaboration with parents to ensure that each child’s nutritional needs were met.
- Staff would sit with children at mealtimes to create a calm and sociable atmosphere.

Infection control policy:

- Did not include the prevention of cross infection and managing outbreaks of infectious diseases to include reporting notifiable infections to Tusla.
- Did not include the cleaning procedures that take place within the service for example, mouthed toys

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Menu and Healthy Eating Policy has been updated stating alternative healthy option available in the event of child requests.

As the registration forms are filled the staff will be informed regarding special dietary requirements of a child.

The service will engage with the parents on the child nutritional needs and make sure they are met.

Infection control policy updated and meeting held with staff to go through policies and each staff member was given a copy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email of Updated Policies and minutes of meeting held 10 April 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 10 has been adequately addressed.

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.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

On the morning of the inspection there were 5 adults working directly with 20 children aged between 1 to 6 years and on the afternoon of the inspection there were 3 adults working with 7 children aged from 3 to 6 years.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

The registered provider was available in a supernumerary capacity and covered breaks in rooms as required.

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed that two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

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:

(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;

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by—

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(f) Details of communication with parents about the development and progression for one child while attending the service, was not available, relevant to the provision of their special care needs and requirements. For example, no written or electronic records were available to demonstrate that staff reported regular progress updates or had engagement with parents regarding the child’s learning and developmental plans, milestones reached or information on progression within the service, leading to a risk of information not being readily available for new staff or students who require access to this information when in the care rooms where this child attends.

(3) (a), (b), (c) No written record as per (1) above was available for inspection by an authorised person

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(f) The service has made a separate form to be signed by parents regarding any illness, disabilities, allergy or special need of the child. Staff meeting held with 10 April 2025 with staff to go over these forms and make sure they are filled in as appropriate.

(3) Spoke to staff in relation about record keeping regarding their special care needs, their plans and their review

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(f) Photographic evidence and copy of record of preschool form 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 15 has been adequately addressed.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(i) The service maintained a weekly staff sign in roster to reflect the staff present in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(k) On review of ten accident and incident forms information was missing as follows:

- The surname of the child was missing from one form.
- The date of birth of the child was missing from two forms.
- The parent's signature and date of signature was missing on two forms
- The date of the parent's signature was missing from four forms.
- The date of the manager's signature was missing from one form.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(k) Meeting held with staff regarding the incidents form and specifying that forms need to be fully completed and signed by parents

Supporting documentation submitted

(k) Minutes of meeting held 10 April 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 has been adequately addressed.

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Children in all rooms were provided with drinks of water in suitable beakers or cups throughout the day whilst in the care room, at mealtime and in the outdoor area.
- Mealtimes were sociable and relaxed occasions with staff observed sitting with the children and chatting.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- All children had access to the outdoor play area during the day of inspection.
- The transitions between activities such as nappy changes, mealtimes, free play and outdoor play were observed to be calm and relaxed with staff available to care for the individual needs of the children.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. The atmosphere within the service remained calm and pleasant throughout the inspection.

- Staff interacted playfully with the children, by sitting at their level during play activities and mealtimes.
- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.

Physical Environment and Materials:

- The Baby room was well laid out with materials and toys displayed on low level shelving or in boxes with clearly visible picture labelling. Areas such as play kitchens and musical corner were well equipped with supporting materials such as pots, pans, play food and instruments.
- In the Toddler and Preschool rooms, the materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them.
- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- Between snack and mealtimes suitably sized chairs were available for the children to enable them to sit at the table and engage with a tabletop activity.
- Cosy areas were present in all rooms offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- Artwork completed by the children was visually available to them along with a family wall which displayed family pictures.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with artificial soft surface. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a foam shapes obstacle course, stepping stones, play kitchen with supporting equipment, table with plastic building bricks, scooters, bikes and seesaws.

- (3)
- No practices were observed during the inspection that were disrespectful, degrading or exploitative. Staff engaged with the children in friendly and relaxed manner with each child being supported and assisted while eating, playing and navigating play equipment and games.

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.

Compliance Information

- The children were provided with a morning snack of toast and butter at 10am with a drink of water. Additional food was made available to the children if required. At 12pm a hot meal of tomato pasta and cheese was cooked in the kitchen in the service and was provided with appropriate cutlery given to each child. The children that were present in the service in the afternoon were provided with a selection of sandwiches and water at 2.30pm. Additional and alternative food was available to the children if required and staff were observed assisting the children at snack and lunch 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

General Safety:

- The play equipment and materials observed in use and available to the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The temperature of the care rooms was within the recommended ambient temperature of 18 - 22 °C.
- Cleaning agents were not accessible to children.
- No trailing flexes were observed to be accessible to children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with areas used by the children in the morning cleaned when they were playing in the garden. Nappy changing was completed as per the service nappy changing policy and best practise guidelines.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included liquid soap and thermostatically controlled warm water
- Handwashing was completed in the service before meals, after outdoor play and after using the toilet and nappy changing.
- Lidded pedal bins were provided for the disposal of wastepaper in the sanitary facility.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On arrival to the service at 9.26am, the inspectors observed that the gate of the outdoor area was open, leading to a risk of entry of unauthorised persons into the outdoor area. It is acknowledged that the doors to the service were locked and the registered provider confirmed that the gate is open for drop off of children up to 9.30am and is closed at 9.30am.
2. In the Toddler room, the children attendance book was not completed accurately to ensure the number of children present in the care rooms was recorded, as follows, there were five children observed to be present from 9.25am to 1pm and on review of the attendance book, only four children were marked present. This reduced the effective evacuation in the event of an emergency.
3. Foam padding on two poles in the outdoor area was not fitting correctly and not covering the poles in full. This increased the potential risk of injury.

Infection Control:

4. At morning snack time no plate was made available to the children for their toast. It was placed directly onto the table; this leads to poor infection control.
5. Paper towels were not hygienically dispensed and were observed to be sitting out on a table in the sanitary facility of the service, leading to a risk of cross-contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Staff will ensure the gate is closed from 9.10am and any late children will come to the front door of the service and staff will ensure the gate is locked throughout the day.
2. Staff have been informed that the attendance books need to be completed accurately as the child walks in the door, time of entering and time of leaving.
3. New Pole covers have been bought for the poles and put in place.

Infection Control:

4. Kitchen Staff has been informed to bring plates in when children are receiving toast or any food and meeting held with staff to discuss infection control.
5. Any paper towels sitting out on the table in the sanitary facility have been removed and placed into a dispenser and meeting held with staff to discuss infection control

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Minutes of Staff meeting held 10 April 2025 and Photographic Evidence

Infection Control:

Minutes of Staff meeting held 10 April 2025

Summary Comment

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

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 of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 1 March 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced on the 22 July 2024 and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 14 January 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises

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) A registered provider ensured 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) The service had record in writing of complaints made in respect of the service.

(b) The service had documentary evidence to demonstrate that any complaints received were dealt with according to the service complaints policy.

(3) (a)(b) A record in writing of the nature of complaints and the manner in which it was dealt with was available for inspection on the premises by an authorised person.