

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY063
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Name of Service:	Little Learners Dublin Adult Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D01 H426
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Maher
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne
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

Little Learners is a community service which operates from two care rooms on the first floor of an adult education centre located in Dublin 1. The service provides a sessional and part time service to children aged from 1 to 5 years from 8:30am to 1:30pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The two care rooms; Junior room and Preschool room have access to an enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service employs 5 staff to include the person in charge, and four childcare staff.

On the day of inspection there were four childcare staff including the deputy person in charge caring for 13 children aged from 1 to 5 years of age.

The registered provider visited the service at 10.35am to meet the inspector but was not present during the 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations.

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4).

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)(8)(a),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

Regulation 25 First Aid (1) (2)(2)(a)(b)

and Regulation 26 Fire safety (1) (4)

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

And 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

The scope of the inspection included both the Junior room and the Preschool room.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment and regulation 11 Staffing Levels were assessed across both 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 inspector wishes 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.

(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

(2) During the Inspection, the files of five staff members were reviewed.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for one staff member from a past employer.

One written and validated reference was available for four staff members from a past employer.

(b) One written and validated reference was available for four staff members from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting was available for five staff members.

(4) Evidence available demonstrated that four staff members who worked directly with 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 eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs (DCEDIY).

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) While it is acknowledged that police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult, it was not translated.

(4) Evidence was not available to demonstrate that one staff member who worked directly with 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 eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs (DCEDIY).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff members police vetting was translated and submitted to the Agency and will be kept on file in the service at all times.

(4) Record of Award submitted to demonstrate the staff member who worked directly with 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 was submitted and will be kept on file in the service at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d) Translated Police vetting submitted

(4) Record of Award submitted

Summary Comment

Under Regulation 9, the non-compliances outlined above have been 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 correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:
- Junior room – two adults to five children aged between 1 to 2 years 6 months.
 - Preschool room – two adults to eight children aged between 2 to 4 years.
- (2) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as follows :
- On the day of Inspection, there were four adults working with 13 children during the inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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

(1)(a) Basic Needs:

- The service followed a one-week menu plan which was on display in the hallway and visible to parents. Food provided within the service was prepared in the onsite kitchen with the main dinner supplied by an external catering company.
- On day of Inspection, the inspector observed dinner at 11.30am which was chicken curry with rice. Water was available and accessible should a child require a drink, at mealtimes and throughout the day.
- Mealtimes were held in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere in each care room. Staff were observed to support the children during mealtimes and Children were provided with appropriate cutlery to support their independence during mealtimes.
- Nappies were observed to be changed when required, and at set times. Nappy changing practices were respectful and sensitive with pleasant exchanges observed between the staff and children.
- Children were provided with the opportunity of outdoor play.

Supporting Relationships:

- Respectful and supportive interactions were observed between staff members and the children with a relaxed atmosphere in the service.
- Staff were familiar with the children, spoke in a positive manner and could read their cues to ensure the children's needs were met.
- Warm conversations were observed between the staff and children throughout the inspection. For example, at nappy changing staff were observed to engage the children in conversations using gentle tones.
- Staff updated the parents about the children's day verbally at collection.

Physical and Material Environment

- The layout of the care rooms promoted independent access to activities, equipment and materials, children's toys and equipment were displayed on low shelving and accessible for children to choose their own work.
- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in each care room.
- Age-appropriate play materials in defined areas of interest were available in the care rooms to include:
 - Home corner areas (kitchens with supporting play food and utensils, dolls, prams and buggies),
 - Construction areas (large wooden building blocks, plastic bricks, stickle bricks, shape sorters, links, clicks, straws, waffles),
 - Small world play (dinosaurs, animals, ponies, trains and train tracks, dolls house and furniture, small play people),
 - Tabletop activities (wooden puzzles and jigsaws, peg and peg boards, threading, tessellations, art colouring crayons and pencils with paper),
 - Sensory Play (Sensory table with pasta and supporting play equipment),
 - Rest areas were available in both care rooms to enable children to rest and take a break from activities, they consisted of soft matting, a soft couch, cushions, beanbags, and books.
- Curriculum and daily schedule for each care room was on display.
- The enclosed outdoor play area consisted of an artificial grass surface with an overhead canopy used to shelter the area, enabling outdoor play even in inclement weather. The children had access to; a sand pit (with sand and supporting equipment), a moveable see saw, trucks, dolls and buggies.

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:

- Initial access to the service area via the front door of main building is monitored by reception staff. The entrance to the service is secured by a keypad on the door preventing unauthorised access into the service and unauthorised exit from the service.
- The weekly roster was available for review by the inspector.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the day of inspection.
- Emergency exits in the service were clear and unobstructed.
- The outdoor area was secured with a locked gate and high wall. This reduced the unauthorised access of an adult or the unsupervised exit of a child.
- The temperature of the care rooms was maintained within the recommended 18 to 22°C, the temperatures were recorded as follows:

Room	Time	Air Temperature
Junior Room	11.55am	21.5°C
Preschool room	12.25pm	20.3°C

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition throughout, with the premises and equipment were visually clean, and records of cleaning were available and completed to date.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Handwashing was completed after outdoor play, before mealtimes and after nappy changing.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children.
- Pedal Bins were provided for the disposal of wastepaper in the sanitary facilities.

Safe Sleep:

- During the inspection no children in the service slept but facilities were available to enable children to rest and if required children under two years were facilitated to sleep in a cot when their needs dictated for sleep.
- 10-minute sleep checks documentation is available to record each child's position, colour and breathing pattern during sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Staff did not ensure the safe and effective evacuation of all the children in the event of an emergency by maintaining and retaining accurate information regarding each child's arrival and departure from the service. For example.
 - At 10:31am there was 13 children present in the service but only 12 children were signed into the service attendance book, one child who arrived at 9am was not signed in.
 - At 12.17pm, there were eight children present in the service and 13 signed in. One child who left at 11.40am, three children who left at 12pm and one child who left at 12.10pm were not signed out on leaving the service.
2. In the Preschool room, a trailing flex of a storage heater within reach of the children, posed a trip risk.

Infection Control:

3. There was no hot water in the service on the morning of inspection, in the two sinks in the nappy changing room or in the sink of the Preschool room, thermostatically controlled hot water is required to facilitate effective handwashing.
4. Nappy changing was not carried out in accordance with the Nappy Changing Policy of the service. This increased the potential risk of cross infection. For example.
 - A total of four nappy changes were observed, a staff member used the same apron when changing three children and wore the apron into the care room to collect each child to change.
 - Gloves were not removed until the end of the nappy change, during three nappy changes.
5. The service did not ensure that the soothers used by the children were stored correctly, leading to poor infection control, for example, in the Junior room, two soothers were hanging over two containers in the open air and touching the shelf.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Staff who take children in, sign them in and whoever does the handover signs them out. The service have also stuck post it's to the doors in the event of fire to check the amount of children in the room and mark these off as they go. Staff check the register throughout the day to make sure all children are signed in and out and regularly do a head count.
2. The flex in the preschool room was fixed.
3. The staff member first in attendance each morning checks the water temperature and puts the hot water on if not hot enough.

Infection Control:

4. All staff have been retrained in nappy changing and regular spot checks will be completed.
5. The service ensures that soothers when taken off the children on arrival, will store them in soother boxes with lids.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. No evidence submitted
2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted

Infection Control:

4. No evidence submitted.
5. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The non compliances under Regulation 23 outlined above have been addressed.

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) The service provided evidence that four adults trained in First Aid Response were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

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 7th of September 2023.
 - (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced on the 10th November 2022 and for the number, type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 28th November 2022.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.