

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY126
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Stars Childcare & Montessori
-------------------------	-------------------------------------

Address of Service:	351A Navan Road, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---------------------------------------

Eircode:	D07 HP80
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Niall O'Reilly
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	05/03/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	39
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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 & Y Kelly
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Little Stars Childcare and Montessori is a private service located in Dublin 7, which offers full day care to children. The service operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. A service is provided to children aged between 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey building in a residential area with an additional care room in a prefabricated building to the rear of the premises. The outdoor play area is situated to the rear of the premises, with an artificial grass surface and fully enclosed.

The service operates from five care rooms namely: on the ground floor the Tadpole room with a cot room and the Frog room both catering for children aged from 1-2 years old, on the first floor the Caterpillar room catering for 2-3-year-olds and the Cocoon room catering for 3-4-year-olds. To the rear of the premises, is the Butterfly room in the prefabricated building catering for pre-school children in the 4-5 age group.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 16 adults. On the day of inspection there were 14 adults working in the service to include the person in charge, deputy person in charge, 11 childcare staff working directly with the children and a cook. The registered provider does not work in the service. The person in charge and the deputy person in charge are supernumerary and provide support where needed to cover breaks and support nappy changing, together with managing oversight of the service and facilitated 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 the regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 27. 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.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Tadpole, Caterpillar, Cocoon and Butterfly rooms and did not include the Frog room.

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, deputy 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5

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 person in charge and the deputy 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 with a structure chart on display in the reception lobby of the service.

(2) It was confirmed by the person in charge that three new staff had been employed in the service since the last inspection.

The files of three new staff were reviewed as part of the inspection along with the Garda Vetting disclosures for three staff members whose file were reviewed on the last inspection.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for two adults from a past employer.

One written and validated reference was available for one adult from a past employer.

(b) One written and validated reference was available for one adult from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for six adults. The service had also 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) Police vetting was available for three staff who have lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the three adults 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 and Youth Affairs.

(7)(a) Documentary evidence was available as follows:

- to demonstrate that new staff working within the service had received induction training and had signed off on receiving the induction training.
- to demonstrate all staff had received updated and ongoing training for example the last documented staff meeting was 31 January 2025 and documented one to one meetings with staff.
- to demonstrate completion of appraisals for staff by Management

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) On the day of inspection, there were 10 adults working with 43 children in the morning and 10 adults working with 39 children in the afternoon.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection, the adult child ratios were maintained as follows;

Room Name	Age profile	Morning	Afternoon
Tadpole room	1 to 2 years	4 children with 1 adult	4 children with 1 adult
Frog room	1 to 2 years	7 children with 3 adults	6 children with 3 adults
Caterpillar room	2 to 3 years	11 children with 3 adults	11 children with 3 adults
Cocoon room	3 to 4 years	13 children with 2 adults	12 children with 2 adults
Butterfly room	4 to 5 years	8 children with 1 adult	6 children with 1 adult
Total	(1-6 years)	43 children with 10 adults	39 children with 10 adults

With the person in charge and the deputy person in charge present to support break cover and nappy changing.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that two adults were always present on the premises.

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) Details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis was completed accurately in attendance record books.
 - (i) Staff roster was available demonstrating hours each staff worked.
 - (k) A review of ten accident and incident records demonstrated that all the details were completed on each record.

Non-Compliance Information

- (j) On a review of eight medication administration records demonstrating 50 individual medicine administrations, four parent signatures for acknowledgement of four individual medicine administrations given, were missing from the record.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (j) Management ensured that missing signatures from the individual child's medicine administration book was signed by parents. Management had a meeting with the child's key workers to discuss the importance of obtaining parent signatures for medical administration on a day-to-day basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (j) Photographic Evidence and record of meeting and attendance.

Summary Comment

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

Compliance Information

Basic needs:

- The service provided food for all children attending the service, to include breakfast 8am to 9am, dinner at 11am in the Tadpole and Frog rooms and dinner at 12pm in the Caterpillar, Cocoon and Butterfly rooms and afternoon tea at 2pm. Food is prepared in the service onsite kitchen, and conversation with the cook established food was prepared using fresh fruit and vegetables with the dinner supplied by an external catering company. The inspectors observed the hot meal supplied by the external food company, heated in the kitchen by the cook, served of tomato pasta with water to milk to drink and a tea of beans on toast. A review of the weekly menu plan showed there was a varied selection of food available. Drinks of water and milk were available throughout the day.
- 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.
- Children's need for rest and relaxation were met through the provision of comfortable rest areas with soft mats, cushions and books available. Cots and low stackable beds with individual bedding were available to the children who required sleep.
- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- The person in charge, the deputy person in charge and staff supported each other in the provision of care to the children.

- Communication with parents was completed through verbal updates at drop off and at pick up and through the issue of a monthly newsletter.

Physical Environment and Materials:

- 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 chairs and tables appropriate to children age and size in each room supported children's independence.
- Family walls were visible to the children in the Frog, Caterpillar and Cocoon rooms as they were positioned low on the wall. In the Tadpole room a family wall was present on a higher level but the children had access to family bottles with images of family members in the bottles providing a sense of belonging and identity.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises were fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with artificial grass There was an overhead shelter to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing frame, a slide, a playhouse, a wooden boat, a sand pit with supporting equipment, ride on toys, a tunnel and a seesaw.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Caterpillar room, between 12.18pm and 1.04pm the transitions at sleep time and settling children to sleep was not observed to be timely, smooth and organised, for example, the following was observed:
 - Two children were observed to walk across and jump on prepared low beds with their shoes on.
 - Three children who were not going to sleep on the day of inspection were not provided with adequate activities to keep them occupied while staff supported children to sleep, for example they endeavoured to get activities for themselves by lifting down a box of jigsaws and endeavoured to open the box making noise and then they were sitting on the floor in the corner of the room talking loudly while other children were trying to settle to sleep.
 - One child trying to settle to sleep was distracted by the three children not sleeping and was not able to settle and began walking around the room.

- One child required a nappy change and the staff member was talking loudly across to the child to tell them not to fall asleep as their nappy needed to be changed and they had to wait for support staff to arrive.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Management have created a new policy in the Caterpillar Room. Staff will remove children's shoes at dinner time 12pm. Sleep time is usually 12.20pm. One to One Record meetings with Staff were held to discuss the importance of offering interesting resources to children that do not sleep during sleep time in the Caterpillar Room. Management to ensure that three staff are covering in the Caterpillar Room from 12pm to 1pm. This provides cover if a child needs the toilet or requires a nappy change. Having three staff working in the Caterpillar Room at this time also ensures that one staff assist and supervise children that do not sleep. One to One Record meetings show the importance of creating a safe sleep environment by being calm and speaking in a low voice. Management to regularly monitor the Caterpillar Room to ensure staff are following Safe Sleep Policies and Procedures. Management will also observe each Staff's strengths. Management will organise best suited staff that work well in the Caterpillar Room at Sleep Time from 12pm to 2pm.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Staff sign off, acknowledging shoes are removed at 12pm in the Caterpillar Room. Photo evidence of one-to-one record meeting of the three staff that provide cover during sleep time. Policy of the Month, the sleep policy was discussed during the staff meeting on the 8th of April 2025. Photo evidence of Agenda for April staff meeting and staff accepting attendance letter.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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 weekly roster was available for review by the inspectors on the inspection day.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean and suitable for use by the children to include poles covered with secure foam padding.
- All mattresses used in the cots had safety labels and met safe sleep guidelines.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap, paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required in accordance with the service policy.
- Soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes.
- During sleep time, cots and low stackable beds were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child.
- Sheets and blankets were individual to each child and stored in individual labelled boxes when not in use. Staff reported that the sheets and blankets were sent home every Friday with the children to be laundered at home and returned to the service on a Monday. Spare bedlinen is also available within the service.

Administration of Medication:

- A care plan was available for a child that required regular medication, with their required medication displayed in a conspicuous position in the care room and in the office area of the service out of children's reach. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on the children for colour, breathing, position while children slept.
- Temperatures in the Tadpole cot room, the Frog and Caterpillar rooms at sleep were recorded and maintained between the recommended ambient sleep temperatures of 18°C to 22°C for children over one years old.
- The cot room off the Tadpole room was not congested with equipment and toys and provided a suitable sleep environment.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. At 12.53pm, an unauthorised person was observed by the inspectors to enter the service reception front lobby through the electric gate which had not been closed following a staff members exit and then through the front door which was unlocked for staff to exit. It is acknowledged that two staff were present in the service reception lobby to help with the persons query and the person left immediately. However, this practice leads to a risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
2. The radiator cover in the Caterpillar room, nearest the sink, was damaged with holes in the wire casing present behind the cut out designs of the wooden cover, leading to a risk of injury as low stackable beds were placed close to this radiator cover at sleep time.

Infection Control:

3. Paper towel sheets were not hygienically dispensed, leading to a risk of cross-contamination, as follows:
 - In the Caterpillar room and in the Cocoon room sanitary facility, the paper towel dispensing units were observed to have no cover, and
 - In the Butterfly room, paper towels were placed on the sink.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider and management have reviewed the incident and note that the person was stopped at entrance to the crèche. Notwithstanding, going forward and as an additional safety measure, management will lock the door from inside the reception area, which will ensure that only management or staff can obtain access to the crèche. When someone rings the bell from the main entrance gate, if

management is not at reception to observe on the CCTV, staff in the downstairs rooms will use our intercom system to speak with whoever is outside.

Infection Control:

2. The service has purchased and installed new radiator mesh for radiator in the Caterpillar Room. Management will inform the registered provider of any future maintenance required to ensure same is carried out as soon as possible. The registered provider has supplied a tape which can be used as a temporary measure pending full repair, if required in future. Staff have been informed not to place canvas beds close to radiators.
3. New paper towel dispensers were purchased and installed. Management removed the tray of hand towels beside the sink in the Butterfly Room and informed staff that all handtowels were to be stored in the new hand-towel dispensers. Management to regularly carry out risk assessments across the crèche to identify any potential risks and ensure that repairs are carried out.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence.
3. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has 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 three 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 safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the reception lobby of the service.

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 25 February 2025.

(b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 1 December 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) A recent record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. Documentation available demonstrated fire extinguishers within the service were last serviced on the 29 August 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(b) New fire extinguishers installed throughout the Crèche and maintenance contract renewed. Management to regularly monitor Fire extinguishers and when they need to be replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

(b) Maintenance certificate for Fire Extinguishers dated 18 March 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the preschool children were supervised at all times by staff – in the care rooms, during sleep times, during use of the sanitary facilities for toilet visits and nappy changes, during transitions from indoor to outdoor play and during outdoor play, in the outdoor area.