

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY212				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Learning Circle Childcare				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	2 Beauparc Place, Clongriffin, Dublin 13				
<b>Eircode:</b>	D13 FP82				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michelle Murphy				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	06/05/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>51</td> <td>PM</td> <td>45</td> </tr> </table>	AM	51	PM	45
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	<p>Early Years Inspectorate Area 1 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K</p>
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T Nelson and E Griffin
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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

The Learning Circle Childcare is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 13 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 72 children aged 0 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday. The service operates an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00pm. The service is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider.

The Learning Circle Childcare operates from a purpose built single storey premises, and has five care rooms to include the Baby Room (6 to 12 months old), Toddler room (12 to 24 months old), Playschool room (2 to 3 years old) and Preschool room (3 to 5 years old) in the main building and the Seomra (3 to 5 years old) which is a separate room to the rear of the premises. There are sanitary facilities located off each of the care rooms, and a nappy changing room off the main corridor in the main building. Further sanitary facilities are available for staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear and side of the premises.

### Staffing

There are currently 16 staff employed by the registered provider, including the person in charge, a chef and 14 childcare staff who work directly with the children. The person in charge, the chef and 11 childcare staff were present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 29 Premises

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby, Toddler, Playschool and Preschool rooms and did not include the Seomra.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
  - (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
  - (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-
- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
  - (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
  - (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
  - (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) Discussion with staff established the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were scheduled to be present during the operational hours of the service.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was displayed on a notice board in the hallway.
- (2) The manager reported there were five staff new to the service since the last inspection on the 19 March 2024, and these files were reviewed along with Garda Vetting disclosures for eight staff members whose files were reviewed on the last inspection. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Six validated written references were available from recent past employers.
- (b) Four validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all thirteen files reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Four adults who had lived in a state other than Ireland for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

(4) Four of the five staff 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (4) The documentary evidence available for a staff member who worked directly with children attending the service was not sufficient to establish that they held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The outstanding paperwork was submitted to establish the staff member has the required qualification. The service will ensure all paperwork is in place prior to an employee commencing.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Qualification certificate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(4) 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
- There were 12 staff available to 51 children present on the morning of the inspection and the 45 children present on the afternoon of the inspection.
- (4) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. For example:
- Relief staff were available to provide cover for breaks.
  - Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

### 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:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (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;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing of the particulars detailed in (a) to (i) were 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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) The registered provider ensured the following suitable and appropriate care practices were in place:

- Practices such as mealtimes were observed to be regular and timely. There was a four-week menu plan in place, and alternative meals were provided for children with additional or alternative dietary requirements. Food was prepared to suit the age and developmental stage of the children, and mealtimes were observed to be a sociable occasion where children were supported to self-feed and were not rushed.
- Children's drinks were freely available in the care rooms throughout the day.
- Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be respectful, timely and pleasant experiences for the children. Documentary evidence showed nappy changes were regular.
- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch and other strategies were observed.
- The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, pre-mobile children in the baby room were observed to have the opportunity for one-to-one interaction in the arms of the staff, time seated in a chair and floor play. Staff were observed to read the children's cues of boredom and initiate a new activity.
- Appropriate clothing and equipment were available to provide for comfortable outdoor play experiences. Outdoor clothing such as rubber boots and waterproof clothing were available for rainy weather, and on the day of the inspection individual labelled sunscreen was applied to all children prior to outdoor play.
- Daily routines were available and were reflected in practice. In the Baby room the routine was tailored to the individual needs of the children. Routine provides for comfort and predictability.
- Engagement with families and parents was facilitated via parents notice board and newsletter, where information on updates in the services was shared. Information on the children's day such as feeding, nappies and sleep was shared in individual day books and the service reported they have an open-door policy for parents. This can promote a sense of welcome and identity for young children.

## 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 following measures were observed to safeguard children:

##### General Safety:

- Blind cords were secured.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed, and the equipment available to the children was in good condition.
- Cleaning products were stored up high out of reach of children.
- Children's bottles were suitably heated in a bottle warmer.
- Staff were aware of any children with allergies within the service.

##### Infection Control:

- Children's bottles and drinking cups were individually labelled
- Soothers were stored in labelled lidded containers and there was a box for sterilising mouthed toys available.
- Appropriate pedal operated lidded bins were available throughout the rooms and sanitary accommodation.
- Children's snacks from home were appropriately refrigerated.
- Sanitary areas were in a clean and hygienic condition, with children's nappies stored in individual cubbies.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Care plans were available for children who required specific medication and staff were aware of the practice around this.

##### Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every 10 minutes.

- The sleep facilities were appropriate for the age range of the children, and the service followed their policy in relation to safe sleep practice.

**Fire Safety:**

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- Fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the premises.

**Non-Compliance Information**

**Fire Safety:**

1. The registered provider did not ensure the details of the following was accurately maintained:
  - There was not an up-to-date staff roster available, and not all the staff present on the day of the inspection had signed the staff attendance log in the hallway.
  - A child in one of the care rooms was not recorded as being present in the attendance book.
 Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of staff and children in an emergency.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

**Fire Safety:**

- (a) A roster will be available for every week and all staff were reminded to sign in; children will be signed in as they come in. Management will ensure to check to ensure all children are signed in and a roster will be completed every Friday.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**Fire Safety:**

No evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (b) The service was observed to be safe and secure:
  - Entry to the premises was secured by a coded electronic door release system. This restricted unauthorised entry.
  - There was up to date risk assessments available.
- (d) The premises appeared to be clean and maintained in good condition and there was up to date cleaning checklists available in the care rooms.
- (e) The sanitary accommodation was adequate and suitable:
  - The facilities were maintained in good condition.
  - The toilets were suitable for the needs of the children.