

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY348
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Name of Service:	Enable Ireland Little Pals Preschool
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Address of Service:	Sandymount Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D04 XH22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frankie Barrett
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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

Enable Ireland Little Pals Preschool is an integrated preschool service catering for children with a physical disability and complex needs who are service users of Enable Ireland and children from the local community. The service offers sessional care for children aged 2 to 6 years and is registered to operate from 09:30 to 16:30, Monday to Friday. Currently the service operates sessional care from 09:00 to 12:30 and from 09:30 to 13:00.

The service operates from two care rooms in an Enable Ireland facility in a residential area of Sandymount, Dublin south. The Playgroup room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years and the Montessori room caters for children aged 3 to 4 years. There is a large, fully enclosed outdoor play area which can be directly accessed from the care rooms.

Staffing

The service currently employs 6 staff and there were 6 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present on the day of 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 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*

(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)(b)
- The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- The files of six adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included two staff members who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 07 October 2021. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:
- (a)(b)
- Of the twelve validated, written references that were required, eleven were available from a past employer and one was available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
- Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the six staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
- Police vetting was required and was available for four staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (4)
- Records were available evidencing that the six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were fifteen children being supervised by six adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(c)

Not applicable as the service is not operated single-handedly.

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

(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)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the person in charge reported that children bring in their lunch from home. Lunch took place at 11:00 and children were given a drink with their meal. Staff encouraged children to feed themselves and supported children who needed assistance with their meal. Staff were observed sitting with the children at lunch and engaging in conversation with children promoting a relaxed and sociable atmosphere.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age, the inspector observed children handing out placemats for lunch, lunchboxes and drinks. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent. The inspector observed children cleaning up after their play and children were supported to be independent with their personal care with staff reminding children to wash their hands at appropriate times.

Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

The service had a key person system in place and staff demonstrated a good awareness of the individual needs of each child and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions and songs which were observed during the inspection. Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play and outdoor play. Individual support plans were available

for children who required additional supports and the inspector observed one to one support being given to these children by staff.

Staff described how they communicate with parents regarding their child's day at arrival and collection times and parents were observed in the service at collection time.

The care rooms were bright and were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included arts and crafts materials, small world toys, dress up clothes, sensory play, home corners, construction toys, library areas and rest areas. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Children's artwork and birthday wall were displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for coats and bags. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level specialist chairs and equipment based on individual children's need and low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was available in the courtyard of the building with paving and shock absorbent surfacing. Children accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection. Children were observed to be engaged in their play with adults supporting them as needed.

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 inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.

- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before lunch.
- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- Children's lunches were stored in the refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an administration of medication policy in place. Practices in line with this policy were observed on the day of inspection. Documented care plans were available for children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff were aware of the treatment plan and demonstrated knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

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)

A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

- (a) First aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.
- (b) First aid boxes were available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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 detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 20 June 2024.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that fire fighting equipment had been serviced 16 January 2024 and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 20 June 2024.
- (4)
- The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.