

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL138
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Little Learners Corner
-------------------------	----------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Swords Manor, Brackenstown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 K6W7
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sandra Cummins
-------------------------------------	----------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	23/08/2023
-------------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	14
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180 – 189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully & C. Harte
<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

The Little Learners Corner is a privately owned early years service that provides full day care, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged between 2 – 5 years. The service is located in a small shopping mall in a suburban area of North County Dublin. There are 3 care rooms in the service, however, on the day of inspection only 1 care room was in operation. There are sanitary facilities for children and staff, a kitchen, an office and an outdoor area to the rear of the premises. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates Monday to Friday from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

### Staffing

There are five adults employed to work directly with the children in the service. The registered provider is present in the service on a daily basis and is available to work directly with the children when needed. On the day of the inspection, 3 adults including the registered provider were working 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 and premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included 11 files belonging to registered children attending the service.

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, 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) There was a designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the day of the inspection. The registered provider was present shortly afterwards and was also present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, a total of 5 staff files and the registered provider's file were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b) Twelve written references were available. All 12 written references were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and 5 adults who were employed to work directly with the children.

(d) International police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided in a country outside of the Irish jurisdiction as an adult for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 5 staff members and the registered provider held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at QQI Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) One staff member did not have international police vetting available from a country outside of the Irish jurisdiction that they had resided in as an adult for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as documented in their curriculum vitae.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

#### **Corrective action:**

International police vetting was obtained by the staff member and submitted to the Inspector.

#### **Preventative action:**

The registered provider stated they will check and verify with staff if they require international police vetting before starting employment. Files will be checked annually.

### Supporting documentation submitted

International police vetting for relevant staff member

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(d) 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) For the duration of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the early years service.

(2) On the day of the inspection the following adult/child ratios were observed:

- There were 16 children in the Preschool room between the ages of 2 years and 9 months and 5 years and 3 months being cared for by 2 adults when the inspectors arrived, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> adult present and available from 9.40am.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a) There was only 1 adult on the premises between the hours of operation from 7.30am – 8.00am, as documented on the weekly staff roster for the week beginning 21/08/2023.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the staff roster was amended to ensure 2 people are present at all times.

##### **Preventative actions:**

The registered provider stated that the staff roster will be checked daily by the manager and deputy manager to ensure there are always two people on opening and cross-check staff and child ratio is maintained.

## **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of new staff roster and staff sign in and out book.

## **Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 11 (8)(a) has been adequately addressed.

## **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.*

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

- (c) an authorised person.*

## **Compliance Information**

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All 11 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3)(c) The children's records were open to inspection by an authorised person, the early years inspector.

## 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;*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(i) There was a digital record available of a staff roster.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) Staff did not sign in and out of the service on a daily basis on the following occasions:

- One staff member had not signed in or out on 21/08/23, 22/08/23 and was not signed in 23/08/23.
- One staff member had not signed out of the service on Tuesday 22/08/23.

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

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The registered provider stated the attendance register for staff now reflects all adults signed in and out on a daily basis.

##### **Preventative action:**

The registered provider stated that they will provide supervision of daily sign in and out records to ensure that all adults on the premises are signed in or out on a daily basis.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of a recent week of daily staff sign-in and out records.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (1)(i) 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

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

##### Basic Needs:

- Staff members were observed interacting with children using soft tones and a supportive manner. This modelled positive interactions.
- The children were given sufficient time to enjoy their snacks and dinner. This facilitated mealtimes to be a social occasion for children to engage with their peers.
- The staff encouraged children to use the toilet and assistance was provided if necessary. This promoted the children's independence.
- A drinks table was observed to be laid out and accessible to children throughout the inspection.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff were observed using a timer in the room to support transitions. This gave guidance for the children on the timeline of their day and scheduling.
- The staff were observed communicating with parents sharing key learning experiences for the children. Parentship between the staff and parents/guardians supports the children's learning and development.
- Conversations around planning and activities took place between staff members deciding materials to be used to support the children's learning and daily routine.

##### Physical and material environment:

- Equipment and resources were placed on low level shelving allowing easy access for children attending to their curiosity and active participation.
- Activities were observed supporting sensory development. For example, in the outdoor area children were observed playing with a water tray.

- Children had access to a range of arts and craft materials for cutting and gluing supporting the children to express themselves creatively and practice fine motor skills.
- A selection of books was available supporting early literacy and language development.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs:

A defined space for rest was not available within the care room. A child was seen requesting a space to rest at 10:12am and was returned to their activity. The child was observed asking a further two times before becoming upset and was provided with a bed for rest at 10:25am. Providing access to a place for rest supports the children to independently choose quiet times for relaxation creating opportunities to unwind both physically and emotionally.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that a space in the room has been designated as a rest area, and a rest area is provided in all rooms.

#### Preventative action:

The registered provider spoke with staff about how they can provide spaces for rest and how they make sure all areas are available in the room.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of new rest area.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 (1)(a) has been adequately 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 main entrance to the service was secured by an electromagnetic locked door which is also monitored by CCTV and an intercom system. Visitors use a doorbell to signal arrival and the door is opened by a staff member. These measures prevent children from exiting unsupervised and restrict unauthorised persons from gaining entry to the service.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children at all times.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and out of children's reach.
- The designated emergency exits were unobstructed.
- The equipment and furniture provided and available to children was appropriate and safe.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided and available in the sanitary facilities and other hand wash basins in the service.
- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being used and disposed of by staff members after each individual nappy change in line with the service nappy changing procedure. Staff members and children washed their own hands after each nappy change.
- Tables were appropriately cleaned and disinfected prior to use for meal times.
- Staff could detail the appropriate procedures regarding the cleaning and sterilisation of soothers and there was a portable microwave steriliser available and in use on the day of inspection.
- The care rooms and sanitary facilities were clean and up-to-date cleaning schedules were on display.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- There was a detailed medical care plan available and on display for a child attending the service who required specific care and attention. In addition, all staff demonstrated their knowledge and familiarity of the child's care needs in line with the plan that was created in partnership with parents and medical practitioners.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children over the age of 2 years who required sleep during the day were provided with a stackable bed positioned at the recommended distance of a minimum of 50cm apart. Each child had their own set of bedlinen.
- A written sleep check record was maintained when children were sleeping, denoting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern at 10 minute intervals.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

1. A nappy bin in use was not a pedal-operated bin. The bin available required the use of a handle to hygienically dispose of soiled nappies. The use of such bins increases the risk of cross-contamination and poses an infection control concern.
2. Morning snack belonging to some children who brought their snack from home was not stored in a fridge. At snack time, these lunchboxes were taken directly from the children's bags and contained perishable food items such as yogurt drinks, ham and cheese.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. A pedal-operated bin has been provided in the nappy changing area.
2. The registered provider has stated that all perishable snacks from children are now stored in a designated fridge in the back room.

#### Preventative action:

2. The registered provider stated that the room leader will check the children's bags on entering the preschool for perishable snacks and store them in the fridge. The designated person in charge will check to ensure this is done daily.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence of a pedal operated bin in place in nappy changing room
2. Photographic evidence of snacks stored in a designated fridge.

### 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 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) On inspection of the daily attendance register at 9.50am, 5 of the 16 children had not been checked in on arrival to the service. On further review of the attendance register, no child had been checked out of the service the day previous 22/08/2023.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated the attendance register for children now reflects all children signed in and out on a daily basis.

##### **Preventative action:**

The registered provider stated that the designated person in charge will ensure that all children on the premises are signed in or out on a daily basis.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of a recent week of daily staff sign-in and out records.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 24 (1) has been adequately 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

(2)(a)&(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and easily accessible.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) The staff roster indicated that there are periods of the day on a weekly basis where there was no person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) on the premises at all times. This occurred as there is currently only 1 staff member with a valid FAR certification.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has booked a FAR training course to be completed on 01/11/2023 and evidence of certification will be provided to the inspectorate.

##### **Preventative action:**

The registered provider stated they will complete training and will check records annually to identify when training needs to be renewed.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of training booked with a completion date included.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted that training in FAR will be undertake. However the non-compliance is outstanding until evidence is submitted to indicate that the training has been completed.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record was maintained of monthly fire drills. The most recent recorded fire drill took place July 2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type, and maintenance of the smoke alarm on the premises, which was last serviced 28/03/2023.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) The fire fighting equipment had records indicating they were last serviced in February 2022. This equipment requires servicing on an annual basis.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

All firefighting equipment has been serviced by a registered technician dated August 2023.

##### **Preventative action:**

The registered provider stated they will record in a diary when equipment requires servicing and ensure this is done.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the fire equipment servicing certificate.

#### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1)(b) has been adequately addressed.