

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL143
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Name of Service:	Learn 2 Grow
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Address of Service:	5A DunEmer Avenue, Lusk, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K45 HD82
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Broderick
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Taaffe
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

Learn 2 Grow is a privately-owned early years service which has been in operation since 2006. The service accommodates pre-school children from 1 to 6 years of age with eligible pre-school children facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00midday daily for 38 weeks during term-time each year. School aged children are no longer accommodated in the service. Learn 2 Grow operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday and is conducted from a corner-site purpose-built 2-storey premises beside a commercial shop unit in a residential setting in Lusk in north County Dublin. There are 5 care rooms provided on the premises, namely the Wobbler Room and the Toddler Room located on the ground floor with the Butterfly Room, the Bumblebee Room and the Ladybird Room located on the first floor. A separate sleep room with 6 cots adjoins the Wobbler Room and a second smaller sleep room with 3 cots adjoins the Toddler Room. Ancillary accommodation includes a kitchen and office on the ground floor and a staff room on the first floor. The service has a fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 12 staff members which consists of a service manager, 10 further core childcare staff and a chef. The service manager coordinates the operation of the service on a daily basis and is available to assist in the care rooms when required. 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 24 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.15am and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

A total of 13 staff files were reviewed, in respect of the registered provider and the 12 staff members employed in the service.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 13 adults whose files were reviewed.

(a) Nineteen written references were from past employers.

(b) Seven written references were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and all 12 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4) The registered provider and all 11 staff members who work directly with the children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.

(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 was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the highest numbers of children were present during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler Room there were up to 10 children (of whom 5 children were aged 1 year to 1 year 11 months, 4 children were aged 2 years to 2 years 2 months and 1 child was aged 3 years 1 month) being cared for by 2 and, at times, 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler Room there were 6 children aged 2 years 4 months to 2 years 7 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Bumblebee Room there were 5 children aged 2 years 5 months to 2 years 11 being cared for by 2 staff members, one of whom had commenced employment on the day of inspection and who was being inducted by the second staff member throughout the morning of the inspection.
- In the Butterfly Room there were 6 children aged 4 years 3 months to 4 years 9 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Ladybird Room Montessori there were 5 children aged 3 years 1 month to 4 years 2 months being care for by 1 staff member.

At times 2 staff members cared for the maximum combined number of 11 children attending the Ladybird Room and the Butterfly Room as a group in the Ladybird Room to facilitate play opportunities and support interactions.

The service manager was available to provide relief and support to the care rooms including during the 1 hour period when a new child was present for the first time in the Wobbler Room during the inspection, and at mealtimes and for nappy changing and break cover in all care rooms when required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in the service.

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

The following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic needs:

- Staff members sat with the children at mealtimes, chatting and providing assistance as required which created a relaxed atmosphere. The four youngest children in the Wobbler Room who could not yet sit unsupported were placed in highchairs at mealtimes and the remaining children in this care room sat on chairs with sides and splayed legs to support them to sit stably. In each care room, children who were able were encouraged to feed themselves and assistance was provided by staff members as required, with plenty of time allowed for the children to eat without rushing. Drinking water was available and accessible to the children in the individual care rooms.
- The children had their nappies changed regularly and in a timely manner with the staff members observed warmly engaging with the children throughout the procedures and taking the opportunity to chat with and sing songs to the children. Toilet trained children were supervised discreetly when using the toilets and support was given when needed.
- Staff members informed the inspector that the sleep needs of the children in the Wobbler Room were generally met in line with their home routine but that these children would be facilitated to sleep when they showed signs of tiredness outside of their normal routine, if required. The children were observed being placed to sleep when they showed signs of tiredness during the inspection. The children attending the Toddler Room were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest in the afternoon, after dinner. Each room has spaces equipped with soft matting and cushions for children to rest or relax outside of scheduled sleep times and children were observed spontaneously accessing these areas for short periods of rest during the day.
- Outdoor play was facilitated for the children in all the care rooms on the day of the inspection with the children dressed appropriately in coats and hats before going outside.

Supporting relationships:

- A welcoming atmosphere in the service was evidenced by the staff members greeting children and parents in a friendly manner on their arrival to the service. Parents were provided with the opportunity to exchange information about their children with the staff members at drop-off and collection. A written record of the pre-school children's meals, activities, general wellbeing and, if relevant, nappy changes and sleep was maintained on a daily basis which was provided to parents when the children were being collected from the service.
- The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the children's individual personalities and a sensitivity to each child's individual needs, interests and preferences.
- Familiar routines were in place and children's transitions were supported in the service as evidenced by the staff members observed signposting which activities were coming next, including snack and mealtimes, nappy changing, sleep time and indoor and outdoor play. One child attended for their first time on the day of inspection, spending one hour in the Wobbler Room as part of their transition into the service. The service manager was present as a third staff member in the Wobbler Room at that time and the staff members were observed using gentle and reassuring tones of voice, gently encouraging the child to explore the environment, and holding and soothing the child when they needed comforting.
- Children's behaviour was managed in an age-appropriate and positive manner with distraction and problem-solving techniques used to good effect to prevent any minor problems from escalating.

Physical and material environment:

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined interest areas to prompt and support children to engage in self-directed and imaginative play. Interest areas included home and kitchen corners, shop areas, construction areas, arts and crafts zones and library corners. The play materials are stored on low-level shelving which are accessible to the children in attendance.
- Stable props and push along toys were provided in the Wobbler Room, to support the children to engage in physical and gross motor activity through self-initiated movement.
- Trays containing coloured dried rice and dried pasta and playdough were provided in the care rooms to facilitate sensory play experiences.
- Family photographs were on display which supported the children to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in the service and maintained links with family and home.

- The fully enclosed outdoor play area which was located to the rear of the premises was fitted with an impact-absorbing surface which was inlaid with a lined roadway around the perimeter and a hopscotch design to facilitate play opportunities on ride-on toys and also physical activity. A large wooden climbing frame, a sand pit, two fixed wooden and metal rocking toys, a fixed low-level wooden bridge, plastic rockers, hula hoops and a plastic playhouse were included in the play materials and equipment provided to support outdoor play experiences for the children in the service.

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 external doors and garden gates were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation and care rooms did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on high shelving out of reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being used and disposed of by staff members after each individual nappy change. Staff members washed their own hands and supported the children to wash their hands after each nappy change. Additionally, the children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after outdoor and messy play.
- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided in the sanitary accommodation of the service.
- Soothers were individually labelled and stored in personalised lidded containers when not in use. An electric steam steriliser was available in the Wobbler Room and staff members described appropriate management of soothers and mouthed toys in the service.

- Pedal operated lidded nappy bins were provided for the disposal of nappies which reduced the risk of cross-infection.
- The outdoor sand pit was fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- All children aged less than 2 years slept in a standard cot on the day of inspection. Based on an examination of the children's attendance records maintained in the service, all children under 2 years of age had access to a standard cot on a daily basis.
- In discussion with the inspector, staff members described safe sleep practices. The records indicated and staff members reported that sleep checks were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting the child's position, colour and breathing pattern.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the registered provider and all 12 staff members. However, 2 of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. The two nappy changing mats in the sanitary facilities on the ground floor were torn at the bottom edges leaving foam exposed which was an infection control hazard as the mats could not be thoroughly cleaned.

Safe Sleep:

3. Inadequate space of between 9cm and 27cm was left between a number of occupied cots on the day of the inspection. Spacing of cots at less than the recommended distance of 50cm apart increased the risk of cross-infection and posed a risk that a child could reach out and disrupt the sleep of or cause harm to another child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. Renewed Garda vetting was provided to the Inspectorate.

Infection Control:

2. Two new nappy changing mats purchased to replace damaged mats.

Safe Sleep:

3. Cot room rearranged and cot removed to allow for recommended spacing.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Renewals will be applied for within 6 months of required data.

Infection Control:

2. Staff instructed to inform Manager of any damaged equipment. Manager to inspect toilets and changing areas on daily basis.

Safe Sleep:

3. Staff and manager informed on recommended cot spacings and maximum number of cots in cot room.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A photograph showing appropriate spacing of cots in the service's cot room was submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider following the inspection. The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have 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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

Compliance Information

(3)(a) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) One child who was being accommodated in the Toddler Room on the day of inspection was not documented as present in the attendance records maintained in the service. This posed a risk of the children not being counted under the daily supervision routines or in the event of an evacuation emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(1) The child in question is currently transitioning between rooms. On the day staff had discussed with the parent, moving the child to a new room on a trial basis. Unfortunately, although named in the roll book the child's time 'in' was not recorded. Manager has discussed the matter with all staff in the creche to prevent any future oversight from happening.

Preventive Action

(1) Manager has discussed the matter with all staff in the creche to prevent any future oversight from happening.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective action submitted by the registered provider following the inspection in relation to Regulation 24(1). Assurances given by the registered provider have been accepted and this will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in the office, the Wobbler Room and the staff room on the premises. These were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Based on a review of staff first aid qualifications, it was evident that a person who had undertaken first aid response (FAR) training was not available to the children attending the service at all times. Although two staff members held in-date FAR training certificates, none of the staff members rostered to work from 7.30 – 8.15am and 5.15 – 6.00pm on the day of the inspection, from 7.30 – 8.00am and 5.15 – 6.00pm on 26/03/2024, and from 7.30 – 8.45am and 5.45 – 6.00pm on 28/03/2024 held FAR training.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(1) All staff have been booked to complete in-service FAR course on the 7th, 8th, and 14th of May next. Certification will be forwarded on completion.

Preventive Action

(1) Manager to ensure a staff member with FAR training certificate is rostered at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted showing that 8 staff members attended FAR training on 07/05/2024, 08/05/2024 and 14/05/2024.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance observed under Regulation 25(1) has been adequately addressed.

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 kept of fire drills that were conducted on a monthly basis in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 11/03/2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers in the service, most recently carried out on 15/11/2023.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) The smoke alarms were not serviced on an annual basis in accordance with recommended servicing frequency. Records available in the service indicated that this system was last serviced on 12/07/2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- (1)(b) The smoke alarms have been serviced.

Preventive Action

- (1)(b) Contract confirmed with fire safety company to service and test fire alarm system on a quarterly test.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was provided showing that the smoke and fire detection system in the service was serviced on 18/04/2024.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance observed under Regulation 26(1)(b) has been adequately addressed.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available which showed that there was insurance cover in place for up to 45 pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis, valid until 27/03/2024. The service manager and the attendance records confirmed that no more than 45 children were present in the service at any one time.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required

Compliance Information

(d) The service was in a clean condition. Documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The enclosed outdoor space where the wheeled bins were stored was cluttered with broken tricycles, a stand-in activity centre, tyres, a counter-top fridge, chairs, plastic storage containers, timber and overgrown weeds which posed a risk of harbourage for pests.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(d) Skip has been ordered for removal and clean up of the area. Photos will be forwarded on completion.

Preventive Action

(d) Any unused or broken equipment/toys will be removed on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs were submitted to the Inspectorate on 15/04/2024 showing that the space where the wheeled bins were stored had been decluttered.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective action and evidence submitted by the registered provider following the inspection. The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29(d) has been adequately addressed.