

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL178
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Moo-Moo's Playschool Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Skephubble farm, St. Margarets, North County Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 X0V1
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Catherine Dwyer
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	31
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Finnegan Hayes
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Little Moo-Moos Playschool Ltd. is a privately run service located on a working dairy farm in a rural area of North County Dublin. The service is registered to provide full daycare for children aged 2-6 years from 7:30am-5:30pm Monday to Friday but is currently operating reduced hours until 4:30pm. The service consists of three care rooms; the Bunnies class caters for children aged 3-4years while the Preschool class caters for children aged 4-5years. The Fledglings class caters for children aged 3-5 years who require specialised preschool support. A large indoor activity area referred to as the Haybarn is located to the rear of the service along with a number of enclosed outdoor areas which are accessed directly from each of the care rooms.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs fifteen staff members to work in the service and also works in the service herself. Fourteen staff were 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 registered provider, 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,
- (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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise as required. A review of the roster for the week of the inspection showed that the person in charge or a named deputy is rostered to be on the premises for the duration of the service opening hours.

(c) The service had a clear management structure including deputy managers and room leaders.

(2) Discussion with the registered provider and a review of the roster showed that one new staff member had been employed in the service since the last inspection in November 2023. The file of this staff member was reviewed along with Garda vetting declarations for 6 staff for whom our record showed Garda vetting had recently expired.

(a) Two written and verified references were available from a previous employer in relation to one new staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seven staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) There was no evidence to suggest that the staff member required Police vetting.

(3) Evidence showed that the checks required under (2) had been completed prior to the start date of the employee.

(4) Evidence was available to show that one staff who worked directly with the children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured there was adequate staff available to the children at all times during the day for example eleven staff members were working directly with 32 children on the morning of inspection. Two additional staff were available assist in rooms if needed.

(2) Ratios were maintained in the care rooms. The following was observed;

- In the Bunnies class three adults were caring for 17 children aged 3-4 years old.
- In the Preschool class four adults were caring for 12 children aged 4-5 years old.
- In the Fledglings class four adults were caring for 3 children aged 3-5 years old.

### 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:*

*(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*

*(b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*

*(c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*

*(d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*

*(e) the facilities available;*

*(f) the opening hours and fees;*

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of all staff and contractors was displayed in the service and maintained in the staff files.
  - (b)(c)(d)(e) The information required under (b-e) was available in the safeguarding statement and in the statement of purpose and function.
  - (f) The opening hours and fees were displayed on the parents' noticeboard.
  - (g) Twenty policies, procedures, and statements which the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10 were available for review.
  - (h) Daily attendance records were maintained in each care room.
  - (i) A staff roster was displayed in the office area available for review.
  - (j) Conversations with the registered provider and staff showed the service does not routinely administer medication and such there were no recent medication administration records available for review however a mechanism for recording medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service was available for review.
  - (k) A sample of 19 accident and incident records were reviewed all of which were completed in full.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

*(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

*(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The registered provider ensured there were adequate facilities for children to play indoors and outdoors during the day. The following was observed;

- The care rooms were observed to be well structured providing ample space for movement between activities while the Haybarn provided a separate area for eating and gross motor activities.
- A range of equipment was provided in all areas accessible to the children which allowed for spontaneous play experiences.
- A range of books which were maintained in good condition were readily available to the children in each room supporting the development of pre-reading skills.
- A large outdoor area which is divided into three large spaces was available to the children. The toys and equipment available supported a range of play experiences and skills. For example, a large climbing structure, swings, and balance beam provided opportunities for gross motor activities while wooden tractors and a playhouse provided opportunities for imaginative and role play. A small, covered area which was adequately secured allowed opportunities for children to bring activities such as stories from the classrooms into the outdoor environment and provided a sheltered seating area for small group activities.

(b) Rest areas were available to the children throughout the day for example in the Fledglings class soft mats, two soft chairs and blankets were available for children while in the Haybarn a large sofa provided a place for children to rest and take a break from activities if needed.

(3) (a) A large outdoor play space was provided on the premises.

### 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 entrance to the service was secure which prevented unauthorised persons accessing the service. A number of gates which were fitted with bolt locks provided small containment areas throughout the grounds of the service which ensured safe movement of the children between the classrooms, outdoor areas and the haybarn. This prevented children leaving the service unnoticed or accessing unsafe areas.
- Blind cords were adequately secured in rooms where they were present preventing injury to the children.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards preventing risks to the children.
- Water in all sanitary areas was thermostatically controlled below 43°C to prevent injury to the children.
- Cleaning records were available and completed to date throughout the service.

##### Infection Control:

- Food which is brought from home was observed to be refrigerated in each care room and the Haybarn to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Dispensed soap and handtowels were available in sanitary areas to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Pedal operated bins were available in all sanitary accommodation for disposal of contaminated items.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The service ensured the safety of children who required emergency medication. Staff were knowledgeable of the individual needs of the children and the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency. Individually labelled bags were used to store children's medication and health care plan and

staff were observed to bring the bags from area to area as the children moved. This ensured that the medication and health care plan were readily available to the staff in the event of an emergency

**Fire Safety:**

- Fire exits throughout the service were observed to be unobstructed.
- Staff were knowledgeable of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency whether they were present in the care room, Haybarn or outdoor area.

### 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*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Children are checked into and out of the service by a staff member in their care room and attendance was recorded in a timely manner to adequately reflect the children present in the service.

(3) (a)(b) Staff were observed to greet visitors at the main door to the service which prevented unauthorised persons accessing the service. A visitor record book was available in the office and the inspector was asked to sign in. A second review of the visitor book later in the day showed the attendance of a parent who conducted an activity with the children on the day was also recorded.

(4) Previous entries in the visitor book dated back more than one year.