

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL178
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Name of Service:	Little Moo-Moo's Playschool Ltd
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Address of Service:	Skephubble farm, St.Margarets, North County Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 X0V1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	20/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	2
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes & T. Nelson
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Description of service

Little Moo-Moos Playschool Ltd. is a privately run service which is 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. The service consists of three care rooms; the Bunnies class caters for children aged 3-4 years while the Preschool class caters for children aged 3.5-5 years. The Fledglings class caters for children aged 3-4 years who require specialised preschool support. A large indoor activity area 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 sixteen staff members to work in the service and also works in the service herself. A Senior Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst is subcontracted by the service to provide support to the parents and children in the Fledgling class on an ongoing basis.

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, safety and premises and facilities. 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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued on the day of inspection to the registered provider in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 in relation to safety. A response which adequately addressed the non-compliance was received on 21st November 2023.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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,
- (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 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.

(2) Discussion with the registered provider and a review of the roster showed there are currently 17 staff and a subcontractor employed to work in the service. The files of all 18 adults were reviewed.

(a)(b) Thirty-six written and verified references were available in relation to 18 adults currently employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting was available for all 18 adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) Evidence was available to show that 15 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 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured there was adequate staff available to the children at all times during the day for example eight staff were working directly with 26 children on the morning of inspection. Three 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 two adults were caring for 12 children aged 3-4 years old.
- In the Preschool class three adults were caring for 11 children aged 3.5-5 years old
- In the Fledglings class three adults were caring for 3 children aged 3-4 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 registered provider ensured that a record in writing was 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 was displayed within the service and further details were available in the staff files.
- (b) The Tusla registration certificate which was displayed in service which detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c)(d)(e)(f) The Statement of purpose and function detailed the adult: child ratios in the service, the type of care or programme provided in the service, the facilities available and the opening hours and fees.
- (g) All policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10 were available.
- (h) A daily attendance record was maintained and was observed to be completed in a timely fashion.
- (i) A set staff roster was available.

(j) A mechanism for recording medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service was available for review.

(k) An accident book used to record details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was reviewed. A sample of 10 accident forms were reviewed all of which were completed in full.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- The furniture and equipment in the care rooms and Haybarn were observed to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean, and suitable for the age and stage of the children attending.
- A range of toys and equipment which supported a variety of play experiences were readily available and accessible to the children to support independent play. For example, all care rooms were stocked with a range of tabletop and small world equipment while the play barn offered opportunities for imaginative and sensory play.
- The outdoor area was secure and provided a natural play environment for 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 areas for small group activities.

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.
- Cleaning sprays were secured out of reach of the children throughout the service.
- Blind cords were adequately secured.
- Windows which were at a level accessible to the children were fitted with restrictors to limit the opening.
- Finger pinch protectors were fitted on doors where required.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean, hygienic manner throughout. Cleaning records which were displayed through the service were completed to date.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water and dispensed soap and paper handtowels were readily available in the sanitary areas to support staff and children to maintain adequate hand hygiene.
- Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas for disposal of contaminated items.
- Refrigerators were available in all care rooms for refrigeration of children's lunches which were brought from home and may contain perishable items.
- A detailed policy and risk assessment were available to support safe interactions between the children and animals on the farm. Additional fencing was in place to maintain animals at a safe distance from the children while still allowing the children to engage with the animals.

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.
- Attendance records were completed in a timely manner to ensure they reflected the children present in the service. This ensured an adequate record of children in attendance was available in the event of an emergency.
- The registered provider acknowledged the potential issues which children can experience during a fire drill and discussed the procedure for introducing the children to the fire drill stating that the service sends a video of their fire drill and a story to parents prior to their children start in the service as a way of supporting the children to familiarise themselves with the process.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The radiator in the Fledglings class was not thermostatically controlled at a safe temperature and was accessible to the children through a section at the top of the radiator cover. The temperature of the radiator was recorded to be 54.8°C at 10:40am which posed a potential risk of scalding to the children. An immediate action notice was issued during the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. There is a safety valve on the thermostat control which will not be touched when set correctly. The temperature will permanently stay at the correct temperature. A full cover radiator cover has been ordered, and for temporary purposes, a cover was placed over the full radiator, and it could not be accessed. Management spoke with all staff to ensure radiator temperatures are never altered and have created a checklist to ensure all radiator temperatures are checked daily. This safety check has been added to our morning, midday, and evening safety checklist which is completed by staff and management. Management made the teachers aware of this additional note on the checklist and the temperature will be monitored consistently. If any maintenance is being carried out in the classrooms, when complete the management will ensure that the risk assessment check includes checking to see if the radiator temperature has been changed. If it is changed, it will be recorded and reset before any classes resume.

Supporting documentation submitted

Images and a copy of the risk assessment were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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 review of the roster and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates for five staff showed that the registered provider ensured that a person trained in FAR was available to the children during the opening hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b) Adequately stocked first aid boxes were available in all care rooms and the outdoor area. These were stored appropriately out of reach of the children but immediately available to the staff as needed.

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 firefighting 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) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service. The record showed the last fire drill took place on the 23rd October 2023.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was reviewed. The record showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 23rd June 2023 while the smoke alarm was last serviced on 11th August 2023.

(4) Notices of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency were displayed throughout the service in care rooms and communal areas.