

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL181		
Name of Service:	Little People Playgroup		
Address of Service:	1 Castleknock Drive, Laurel Lodge, Dublin 15.		
Eircode:	D15 Y159		
Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Jordan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM No.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte		
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.

Description of service

Little Peoples Playgroup is privately owned service offering sessional care to children between the ages of 2-6 years. The service offers two session per day 9:00am-12:00pm and 12:30pm-3:30pm Monday to Friday. The service is located in an extension to the registered providers home and includes two indoor care spaces, sanitary facilities and an outside play space located at the back of the building.

The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and education programme (ECCE).

Staffing

The service employs five staff. On the morning of the inspection the registered provider and two staff were present working directly with the children.

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, 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.

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,
- (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 named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Discussion with the person in charge and a review of the staff roster showed there are currently 6 adults working in the service. The files of all 6 adults were reviewed.

(a) Three written and verified references were available from a past employer.

(b) Eight written and verified references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all/ number 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.

(d) Police vetting disclosures from three countries were available for three staff who resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months as adults.

(4) Evidence was available to show that 6 adults 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) Although two references were available on file there was no record of validation available for the second reference for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

New reference was requested and verified immediately after it was received and added to the file.

Preventive action

All staff files will be checked prior to the commencement of each academic year to avoid further non-compliance like this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Verified reference.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been 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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection the registered provider ensured there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

- At 9:39am there were three adults caring for seventeen children aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was adequate space for children to play during the day. The service had two indoor play spaces with an adjoining door which children could move between freely following small group time. The indoor area had suitable facilities for the age range of children attending the service.

The children also had access to a large outdoor space that included a variety of areas providing for different types of play. The outdoor area included a section for digging, a tree for climbing and a covered section that provided shelter from poor weather and shade from the sun.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The service did not have a suitably equipped area for children to rest during the day and take a break from activities. A rest area with soft seating or matting allows for the children's comfort and provides a space to rest or lay down.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The library area has had some matting, a washable bean bag and some washable cushions added. The library has been positioned to section the area while still allowing for supervision.

Preventive Action

The area will remain like this as it has been a very positive change. The children really like to relax there.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic images.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 20 has been addressed.

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 furniture and equipment were appropriately sized and observed to be durable and easy to clean.
- There was a variety of play materials available to children offering opportunity for a range of play experiences. A mark making station included a selection of art materials, coloured papers, old celebration cards and glue encouraging creativity. There was a sensory tray with coloured rice, pots, and pans and large management board providing for sensory experiences. Themed areas such as dolls and dress up included a range of props to enhance and extend children’s play. The library included a book made of the children with their show ad tell supporting a sense of belonging and achievement.
- The toys and equipment were grouped and accessible to the children.
- The outdoor area allowed for the use of fundamental gross motor skills and included a slide, balance beam and ride on toys.

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 premises was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised or unauthorised persons from gaining access.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.
- There was evidence of daily risk assessments completed for the indoor, outdoor, and sanitary areas.

Infection Control:

- Children were supported and encouraged by staff in hand hygiene practices following toileting and time in the outdoor area. Warm water, dispensed soap and dispensed hand towels were available.
- Staff were observed to assist children with self-care skills such as cleaning their noses and then wash their hands.
- Children's lunches brought from home including perishable items were stored in the refrigerator.
- Staff cleaned tables before and after lunchtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medicine was stored in its original labelled containers.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Areas of wood were observed to be damaged on the treehouse structure in the garden. For example, the steps leading up to the tree house and sections of wood which formed the design of windows. This posed a potential risk of splinters and injury to the children.

Infection Control:

2. Sand trays in the garden were not fitted with a suitable cover to prevent animals from accessing the area and were observed only partially covered with planks. This posed the potential risk of illness from contaminated sand.
3. Toilet roll was not hygienically dispensed in one of the children's toilets and was observed sitting on top of the cistern. Toilet roll should be hygienically dispensed to prevent cross contamination.
4. There was no foot pedal bin available in the second toilet this is not in line with HPSC practice guidelines. A foot pedal bin reduces the risk of contamination.

Administration of Medication:

5. Emergency medication was stored on the premises for a child who staff advised left the service last year. The services medication administration policy did not include a section on the disposal of medication.

Fire Safety:

6. A gate in the garden which forms part of the evacuation route was observed locked with a padlock. Staff were not aware of where the key was stored to open the padlock. This may impede the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged that the registered provider was able to demonstrate where the key was stored and was rostered to be on the premises during operational hours.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Corrective action:** The damaged wood has now been replaced.
Preventive action: A regular examination of all equipment will be carried out and areas of damage attended to in timely manner.

Infection Control:

- Corrective action:** Sand boxes are now fully covered.
Preventive action: This process has been added to daily cleaning roster.
- Toilet roll holder has been replaced.
- Pedal bin has been purchased.

Administration of Medication:

- Corrective action:** Medication was returned to parent.
Preventive action: Medication policy review to include disposal of medication.

Fire Safety:

- Corrective action:** All staff reminded of process of key storage.
Preventive action: Update to the fire evacuation policy to include location of key storage reminder during monthly fire drills.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Administration of Medication:

No supporting evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

No supporting evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been 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

(1)The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

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) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service. The record showed that fire drills were conducted monthly and the last one recorded was on the 20th March 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was available for review in the service. The record showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 5th December 2023 while the smoke alarms were last serviced on 8th December 2023.