

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL283
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Name of Service:	Sticky Fingers Early Years Service
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Address of Service:	36 Mount Drinan Ave, Kinsealy Downs, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 N251
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Ladrigan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	0
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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

Sticky Fingers Early Years Service was established in 1997, operating as a privately-owned sessional early years service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.30pm from Monday to Thursday for 41 weeks each year. The service which is registered to accommodate a maximum of 17 pre-school children from 2 – 6 years is conducted from two rooms in the registered provider’s home, namely ECCE Room 1 and ECCE Room 2, located in a residential setting in Swords. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider and two core staff members were present on the day of the inspection, all of whom work directly with the children on a daily 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. 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 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 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,

(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 registered provider is the designated person in charge of the service and the service manager is appointed to deputise in the absence of the registered provider when required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived at the service on the morning of inspection.

The staff files for the registered provider and the 2 staff members were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written references available for the registered provider and 2 written, validated references available for the 2 staff members.

(a) Four of the 6 written references reviewed were from past employers.

(b) Two of the 6 written references reviewed were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and the 2 staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files there was no evidence that international police vetting was required for the registered provider or either member of staff.

(4) The registered provider and both staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) On the day of inspection, the registered provider, the service manager and a further staff member were working directly with 14 pre-school children aged 2 years 10 months to 5 years 2 months, all attending the service on a sessional basis.

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 of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic needs:

- There was a warm and caring atmosphere in the service as evidenced in the registered provider's and staff members' consistent use of positive and affirmative language and gentle tones of voice when speaking to and about the children, making eye-contact and positioning themselves at the children's level during interactions.

- Platters of sliced bananas, strawberries, apples, blueberries, crackers and cheese were made available to the children by the registered provider at 10.15am with the children observed choosing their preferred options. Later on during the morning the children ate their snacks provided from home which included sandwiches, bread rolls, crackers, cheese, fruit and yogurts. The adults sat, ate with and were relaxed and sociable with the children during snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions, making reference to the children's favourite activities, siblings, parents, grandparents and pets by name in a familiar manner.
- The children were observed using the toilet independently with support and assistance provided as required.
- There was an emphasis on outdoor play in the service and the children were observed enthusiastically playing in a busy and engaged manner in the well-resourced and well-maintained garden during the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The registered provider and staff members demonstrated kindness and respect for the children as evidenced by their warm and positive engagement with each child during the inspection. It was observed that the adults were actively involved in children's play, followed the children's lead, and responded to children's social bids by engaging in individual conversations, joint laughter and reciprocal shows of affection throughout the session.
- The children were encouraged to respect and be kind to each other as evidenced on a number of occasions when different children helped each other with activities without prompting during the inspection. The adults encouraged and praised the children in relation to kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you.
- An effective team spirit was demonstrated in the manner in which the adults engaged and consulted with each other as they organised the daily routine and sharing of tasks.
- Transitions were well supported in the service. Throughout the session verbal strategies including tidy-up-themed songs were used by the adults to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.

Physical and material environment:

- The play materials and equipment and the furniture in both rooms and the fittings in the sanitary accommodation were positioned at an accessible level which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- ECCE Room 1 was predominantly used for arts and crafts activities, table top activities and eating while ECCE Room 2 was used to facilitate child-led and free play opportunities. Arts and crafts supplies; a range of jigsaws, blocks, animals, shape sorters, pegs and boards; a library area with a plentiful supply of books and a comfortable rest area with a leather couch and child-sized wicker armchair were provided in ECCE Room 1 while a well-resourced home corner, shop area and construction zone were established in ECCE Room 2. The children accessed both spaces freely during the inspection. Additional play materials were available on the premises and the inspector was informed that these materials were rotated for use on a regular basis to support the children's interest, play and learning.
- Educational posters and samples of the children's art work which had been recently completed as part of a learning plan on the solar system were on display in ECCE Room 1. The children demonstrated extensive knowledge of and interest in the planets and space travel, as heard in discussions taking place between the adults and the children and in the stories told during the inspection.
- The outdoor play area was laid out in defined interest areas and child-initiated play was enabled through the provision of a broad range of play materials and equipment to support the children to engage in activity, exploration and imaginative play outside. The materials included a wide selection of ride-on toys, a well-resourced sand table, a mud kitchen with pots and pans, two slides, goal nets, a basketball hoop and net on a stable stand, wooden blocks, a lidded box of farm and zoo animals and children's seating. Sections of the outdoor play area were surfaced in natural grass, artificial grass and paving while a bark-covered corner section of the garden, sheltered by mature trees, was set up as a fairy garden with miniature houses, fencing, pathways and fairy-sized ladders in place leading to higher branches in the trees. Within the fairy garden a fallen tree had been trimmed, re-positioned and re-purposed to form a climbing structure and balance beam which was repeatedly and energetically accessed by the children during the inspection.

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 doors leading in to the service were secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised or an unauthorised adult from entering the service. The gateway to the side of the premises was secured when the children were playing outdoors, restricting access to and from the enclosed garden located to the rear of the building.
- ECCE Room 2 was provided in a section of the residential kitchen/ living room. The kitchen section of this room was made inaccessible to children through the provision of a sturdy wooden latched foldable barrier, ensuring the children could not access any items which may pose a safety risk including the kettle, microwave oven, cutlery drawers or cleaning products.
- The warm water temperature in the taps in the sanitary accommodation in the service was recorded between 29.6°C and 32.4°C on the day of inspection.
- The children attending the service may be required to access a second toilet located in the registered provider's family home, based upon demand for the children's toilet located off the hallway linking ECCE Room 1 and ECCE Room 2. The inspector was informed that children were accompanied by the registered provider or a staff member at all times when using the second toilet.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The play materials and equipment provided in the service were stored on stable-based low level shelving which reduced the risk of the furniture toppling over and causing injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and following messy play and outdoor play. There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the service.
- A refrigerator was available to store perishable items contained in the children's snacks provided from home by the parents. This reduced the risk of bacteria growth in these food items.
- Tissues were available for wiping noses and appropriate hand hygiene practices were observed being undertaken when staff members assisted children to blow their noses.

- The premises was in a clean condition and up to date documented cleaning schedules were available in the service.
- The outdoor sand pit was fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

Administration of Medication:

- No child attending the service required any medication to be administered on the day of inspection. Administration of medication forms were available to record the details of any medication administered in the service, should the need arise.

Fire Safety:

- The exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that the service conducted an annual outing to a local sports facility and demonstrated knowledge of the relevant safety issues associated with the preparation and safe management of these outings. The children's parents accompany their own children on the outings.

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 registered provider and the service manager both held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training, ensuring that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff and available at all times for the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that insurance cover was in place for up to 22 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.