

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL323
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tiggers Playhouse
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	51 Hawthorn Park, Forest Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 FV58
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maria Gibson-Murray
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/06/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Taaffe
<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

Tiggers Playhouse was established in 2002, operating as a privately-owned sessional early years service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.15am to 12.15pm each weekday for 38 weeks each year. The service is also registered to provide an afternoon session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm daily although this session is currently not in operation. Tiggers Playhouse is registered to accommodate a maximum of 19 pre-school children from 2 – 6 years of age. The service is conducted from one room attached to the side of the registered provider’s family home with sanitary facilities for children accessed directly from the pre-school room and an L-shaped outdoor play area provided to the side and rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider is present in the residential premises on a regular basis carrying out administrative duties while generally not working directly with the children in the early years service. Three core staff members are employed to work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis, with 1 of these 3 core staff members employed as the service manager and 1 employed in a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. In addition, 1 further staff member is employed to carry out cleaning duties outside of the operational hours of the early years service when no children are present on the premises.

### 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, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – record of pre-school child.

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 is the designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member is appointed to deputise in her absence when required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.40am on the morning of inspection.

The staff files for the registered provider, the 3 core staff members who work in the service on a daily basis, and the staff member employed when necessary in a relief capacity to cover staff absences were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the registered provider, for the 3 core staff members and the staff member employed in a relief capacity.

(a) Nine of the 10 written references were from past employers.

(b) One of the 10 written references were from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and all 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 any member of staff.

(4) The registered provider, the 3 core staff members and the staff member employed in a relief capacity all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 – 8 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, 3 staff members were working directly with 16 pre-school children aged 3 years 8 months to 5 years 2 months, all attending the service on a sessional basis.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured a record was kept in writing in relation to the children’s details as outlined in Regulation 15 (a) to (i). Twelve children’s registration forms were inspected as part of a sampling process, all of which were found to be appropriately completed with the required information.

### 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:

- Each of the 3 staff members were observed to be caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences. Children's efforts, achievements and behaviour were positively and warmly reinforced with recognition, praise and encouragement by the staff members caring for them.
- The children brought healthy snacks from home, in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. The staff members were observed sitting, chatting with and eating with the children at snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions. The children's water bottles were available to the children throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- Children who were able were facilitated to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision and assistance provided by the staff members when required. The service policy requires the children to be toilet trained in advance of attending the service.
- Children's behaviour was managed in a calm and positive manner with problem-solving techniques used to good effect to prevent any minor problems from escalating. When one child wanted to play with something that another child had, on a number of occasions staff members were observed using sand timers so that each child knew when it was time to share. This gently and effectively prevented any escalation or upset on the children's part.
- All children engaged in outdoor play on the day of inspection and were given a choice in this, as evidenced when one staff member remained indoors with a small group of children who were happy to play inside for a longer period before choosing to move outdoors.

### Supporting Relationships around Children

- The children were readily supported in their choice of activities with moments of joint laughter and shows of affection frequently observed during the inspection. During the inspection the 3 staff members were observed to engage children in one-to-one interactions and natural reciprocal conversations about their home, family life and holidays.
- The staff members played alongside the children providing space and opportunity for children to lead and direct play, listening carefully to their stories and questions and responding to the children in an interested and warm manner. In both the indoor and outdoor play environments the staff members were observed engaging in play and activities with the children at an individual, small group and large group level. The children were observed displaying high levels of creativity and confidence when they spontaneously developed a game outside where they stepped on a line of chairs before climbing and descending the slide, balancing on logs at the bottom and following a chalk-drawn pathway back to the start, with encouraging support provided by the staff members.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other. This was particularly evidenced in the staff members observed praising the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you, and the positive regard shown by the children and staff members towards a child with additional needs in the service, fostering each child's inclusion and involvement in activities. The children had learned and used basic Lámh vocabulary, and during the inspection they enthusiastically and confidently sang and signed a number of songs whilst performing the associated actions, rehearsing for the up-coming graduation ceremony, and all appeared to enjoy the activity to a high degree.
- An ethos of teamwork was evident in the service with the staff members observed working collaboratively to support children's play and learning. Regular informative interactions were heard taking place between the staff members when updating each other on the children's needs and progress, and when coordinating the implementation of activities.
- There was evidence of strong family engagement with the service. For example, Father's Day had fallen on the Sunday preceding the inspection and the fathers were invited to "stay and play" with their children in the service on the Friday beforehand and the Monday afterwards (the day of the inspection) with 5 fathers observed engaging in play activities with their children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. Additionally, the children were afforded opportunities to develop a sense of belonging in

the local community with evidence available of invited visitors attending the service including a pilot, a nurse, a paramedic, a Garda, a lollipop lady and a farmer with a real full-sized tractor.

### Physical & Material Environment:

- The children in the service were provided with low level chairs and tables to eat their snacks from and to play at when engaging in table-top activities. The storage of the toys, equipment and play materials in open-fronted shelving units ensured that they were freely and readily accessible to the children.
- The pre-school room was laid out in defined interest areas and was well-resourced with equipment and play materials including real, natural and sensory materials, art and crafts materials, a construction zone, a shop area and a well-resourced home corner.
- Children were facilitated to rest on soft matting and cushions in the library area, if they wished to rest or relax during the session.
- A plentiful supply of books was available in the library area which provided choice and supported children's language development.
- Representations of the children and their learning experiences were very visible in the service as evidenced through the broad range of photographs on display. These included photographs taken indoors and outdoors showing the children engaged in a broad range of play experiences and activities.
- The well maintained outdoor play area was accessible directly from the pre-school room and offered the children opportunities to move and play in the open air, with defined interest areas established. A lean-to structure along the gable end of the premises was covered with plastic corrugated roof sheeting which provided shelter for the children and staff members in all weather conditions. Impact-absorbent tiles and hard surfacing covered separate sections of the outdoor play area. A bark-covered digging patch was also provided. Play equipment included a water table, a well-resourced spacious sand table and large mud kitchen, a slide, a plastic play house, children's seating and benches. Materials for arts and crafts activities, blocks and small world figurines, animals and vehicles were also provided in storage units in the covered section.

### 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 premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years service. Access to the premises was facilitated by the service manager who, having sight of callers through the glass panel at the front door of the service, opened the secured door to facilitate entry.
- The outdoor play area was fenced and the gate was secured with high level latches to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining entry or a pre-school child from gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C and the service manager stated that the warm water supply in the service was thermostatically controlled. This reduced the risk of injury from scalding for the children in attendance.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on high shelving out of the reach of children.
- A tall shelving unit was anchored to the wall to prevent it from toppling over and causing injury to a child, while the remaining storage units were stable-based and low level.

##### Infection Control:

- A refrigerator was available and used to store the children's snacks which were provided from home by the parents, reducing the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.
- 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.
- Tissues were available for wiping noses and appropriate hand hygiene practices were observed being undertaken when staff members assisted children to clean their noses.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were available in the service and the service was visibly clean.
- The outdoor sand table and water table were covered when not in use 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.
- Medications were stored out of children's reach.
- There was a detailed child-specific care plan available for a child attending the service to authorise staff members to administer an auto-injector adrenaline pen in the event that the child would become exposed to an allergen and develop signs of a reaction.

### Outings:

- The manager stated that the service did not conduct 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 service manager held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training and she stated that she was always on the premises when the service was in operation, ensuring that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. A second staff member held in-date paediatric first aid training.

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

### 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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 05/06/2024 with the records indicating and staff members confirming that fire drills took place on a monthly basis.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers and the smoke detection system were both certified as having been serviced on 17/06/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the pre-school room.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 22 children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.