

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK049
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Acorns
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Flower Hill, Rosbercon, New Ross, Co Wexford (FOR POST), Co. Kilkenny
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<b>Eircode:</b>	Y34 PD71
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Carol Leavy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	06/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	36	PM	4
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

<b>Authority to Inspect</b>
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 Acorns is a service situated in the countryside on the outskirts of New Ross. The service is registered to provide a sessional Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) programme and parttime service to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service is open from 9.00am to 4.00pm for 42 weeks per year. The service is currently providing a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.30pm with an option for some children to attend part time until 2.00pm. The service does not provide an afternoon session at this time. It operates from a purpose-built facility situated in the grounds of the registered providers home. The premises consists of two early years rooms, toilets, a hallway, an office, kitchenette, an outdoor classroom, and a large outdoor area to the front of the premises.

### Staffing

There are seven staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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 announced/unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),  
Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),  
Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),  
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,  
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),  
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).  
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were seven staff employed in the service, including the registered provider. All seven files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were five written and validated reference available on file from past employers. There were two written and validated references on file from two previous employers for the registered provider which did not require to be validated.

(c)  
There was evidence of Garda vetting available on file in the service for all seven staff members.

(d)  
Police vetting was available for three staff members who had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)  
There was evidence on file that seven staff working directly with the early years children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above 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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
  - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)  
There were an adequate number of staff working directly with children attending the service.

(2)(4)

At 10.30am there were 7 staff working directly with 36 children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The registered provider was also available in the service on the day of inspection. At 1.10pm there were 4 children aged from 2 to 6 years of age in the care of 3 staff.

## 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 registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of activities during the inspection including eating together, playing together in the outdoor area and enjoying tabletop activities.

Interactions between children were well managed by the staff who were caring for them. For example, children were well supervised while playing in the outdoor area. Children were observed running, jumping and creating imaginative games with their friends. Children were encouraged to share and take turns with each other. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example washing their hands after using the toilet.

During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning by engaging them in topics the children showed an interest in. For example, children had started to discuss what they would dress up as for Halloween. Staff encouraged the children to consider all their options.

The service had a large safe and secure outdoor area situated at the front of the main building. The area consisted of a large, grassed area surrounded by fencing and a newly built wall on the side nearest to the road. There were picnic benches covered with a roof which was open on four sides. There was also a large, tarmacked area for children to play on the ride on toys.

There was an outdoor classroom with a mud kitchen which was well resourced with pots, pans, and utensils. This room was resourced with art equipment for the children. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they used this room when the weather prevented outdoor play.

The two early years room were well resourced with toys, equipment and materials which were easily accessible and visible to the children on open child height shelves. There was artwork displayed on the walls of the classrooms showing the children's handprints. Staff had displayed a sheet of paper for each child outlining their answers to a set of questions. For example, "what is your favorite food?" What do you like to play with?" Staff who spoke to the inspector said this exercise helped them to get to know the children better as they were starting in the service. There were areas of interest in all three rooms set up for the enjoyment of the children. There were rest areas for the children which consisted of child sized couches, a soft floor mat and library books for the children to enjoy.

## 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

The manager had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

#### General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front gate. The gate was secured. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service as there was a clear view of people approaching from the car park, through the glass door. The outdoor play area was safe, suitable, and secure. There was a boundary wall built at the roadside of the playground since the last inspection. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves that were in accessible to children.

#### Infection control:

The service appeared clean on the day of inspection. There were fridges available to store the food provided by the parents for the children. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the toilets beside the outdoor area was recorded at 33°C on the day of inspection. Children were observed washing their hands after using the toilets.

### 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) There was a person trained in first aid for children available to children attending the service.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was available.

(a) It was stored safely in a conspicuous position in the early years service.

(b) The first aid box was always available to children.

### 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)

There was a template in place in the service to record any fire drills that takes place in the service. The last fire drill carried out in the service was recorded in September 2023.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in February 2023. The smoke alarm was last serviced in June 2023.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position beside the main entrance of the service

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence that adequate insurance was in place for 44 children to attend the service.