

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY006				
Name of Service:	Little Voyagers Childcare				
Address of Service:	Ardfert Community Centre, Ardfert, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 HOFE				
Name of Registered Provider:	Hilary Tobin				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	08/10/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>37</td> <td>PM</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </table>	AM	37	PM	33
AM	37	PM	33		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy				
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	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

Little Voyagers Childcare is a community based early years service that is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day care to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service offer care for school aged children. The service is open Monday to Friday inclusive between the hours of 7:30 am and 6pm. The service operates from the community centre building in the rural village of Ardfert, Co. Kerry.

There are 3 care rooms in operation namely the Rainbow room, the Butterfly room on the ground floor and the Pre-school room upstairs. of the building. There are 2 outdoor play areas designated for the children attending the service. The children have access to an indoor hall at allocated times and days of the week, it was not allocated for use on the day of the inspection.

Staffing

There are currently 17 adults attached to the early years service, 16 of whom are involved in the direct care of the children attending the service, that includes the 3 adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme and 2 adults allocated to care of the school aged children. The registered provider is not service based and does not work directly with the children who attend the setting.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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

On discussion with the person in charge, it was agreed that the inspector will send a referral to Better Start, the National Early Years Quality Development service.

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 registered provider had ensured that both a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge was assigned to the setting. There were 2 named deputies.
 - (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the person in charge and the 2 named deputies were on duty. The person in charge remained available to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to 17 adults attached to the service were inspected.
- (a) 27 validated references were on file were from a previous employer.
 - (b) 7 validated references from a source other than previous employers were on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 17 adults.
 - (d) Police vetting was on file for the 2 adults who has resided outside of the jurisdiction.

(4) 16 of the staff members had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), with copies of the relevant qualifications maintained on file.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

The registered provider did ensure that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times.

(2)

The 3 care rooms as listed hereunder were in operation on the day of the inspection: -

Rainbow room

There were 2 adults caring for 4 children aged between 1 and 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Butterfly Room

There were 4 adults caring for 14 children aged between 1 and 3 years, 1 child attending on a sessional basis and 13 children attending on a part-time and full day care basis.

Pre-school Room

There were 4 adults caring for 19 children aged between 13 years and 4 years, 16 children were attending on a part-time and full day care basis and 3 children were attending on a sessional basis.

The adult child ratio was correct.

(8)(a)

The registered provider did ensure that a minimum of 2 adults are on the premises at all times during the hours of operation as evidenced in the staff roster.

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

Basic Needs

- The staff caring for the children on the day of inspection were observed to be kind and caring towards the children.
- The children that required nappy changing were facilitated in a timely manner.
- The children in the Butterfly and Pre-school rooms had unrestricted access to the toilets located within each of the rooms. The 4 children in attendance in the Rainbow room were in nappies.
- The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and their stage of development on the day of the inspection.
- The children were allowed ample time to eat their food in a relaxed, unhurried environment.
- A sufficient number of child sized tables and chairs, a supply of various sized feeding chairs were provided for the younger children and a specialized chair for a child was supplied and kept on the premise.
- The parents of the children attending do supply all the food consumed by the children.
- The food observed at snack time in the morning included a variety of fruit, sandwiches and water to drink.
- The children's individually labelled drinks bottles with water were accessible to them throughout the day. The water was re-filled as was needed.

- The staff reminded the children to take drinks during the session for example as observed in the afternoon in the pre-school room.
- The rest area in the pre-school room was equipped with low level soft vinyl couches. The inspector observed children utilising this area on inspection for example a staff member accompanied a child to read a story there.
- The staff listened to the children as they communicated their needs, they were active in the children's play and supported the children in their interactions with other children.
- Children were supported and comforted as needed, the staff came down to the children's level, re-assuring them. This for example was demonstrated for children who were asking about home time and moving between care rooms.

Physical and Material Environment

- The inspector observed the children in each of the care rooms had access to low level open shelving where the toys were available to the children. The children independently helped themselves to the toys.
- The Butterfly room for example had a variety of toys, for example car stations, a tool bench, a toy kitchen with utensils, blocks and various sized vehicles.
- Adult seating was in place to facilitate nurturing and comforting the children.
- The children were observed playing happily, for example children in the pre-school room were colouring, gluing pictures into their individual scrap books, water play with a car wash purpose built by a staff member in line with an individual child's emerging interest for washing items.
- A painting activity involving hand and feet prints took place in the Rainbow room and drawing pictures with chalks on the tabletop chalk boards in the Butterfly room for example was facilitated.

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-

(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

- There were 4 standard cots in place in the designated sleep room located within the Rainbow room.
- An openable window was in place which was open to ventilate the room.
- The temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 18 degrees Celsius for the children aged over 1 year sleeping on the day of the inspection. The cots were positioned in a way that staff could easily move around to care for the children. There was 50 cms space between each of the cots.
- The linen in use on the cots was observed to be clean and dry.
- The staff informed the inspector when asked that the linen is individual to each child for the cots and for the stackable beds.
- There were 9 stackable beds provided.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The rest area located in the Butterfly room consisted of 1 low level small couch, it was not adequate for the number of children present in the room to rest/ relax an opt out of an activity as they so wished.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. 3 basic floor seats have been purchased, they are due for delivery between 20/11/'24 and 22/11/'24. In the interim older furniture has been returned to the room until the new furniture is delivered.

Supporting documentation submitted

Proof of purchase in respect of the new seating and a photo of the furniture in place in the interim.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met.

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:

- Cleaning products observed on inspection were stored out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- On observation and discussion with the staff, the linen used for the cots and beds was clean and dry, it was individual to each child.
- The nappy changing unit in use on the day of inspection, the surrounds and the changing mat was observed to be clean and dry. The areas and mat were sanitised down after each nappy change.
- For nappy changing the staff wore single-use disposable gloves and single use disposable aprons which were removed after each use. The staff washed their hands and assisted the children to wash their hands afterwards.
- The children's toiletries were individually labelled.

Safe Sleep:

- The staff recorded children's sleep checks electronically every 7 minutes. A record of the children's colour, breathing and position was recorded. A record of the air temperature of the sleep room was recorded, it measured 18 degrees Celsius on inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were 6 highchairs stacked in the Rainbow room during the day posing a risk of injury to children.
2. A portion of grapes served at the morning snack time to a child in the Butterfly room were not chopped up posing a risk of choking. It was acknowledged when brought to the attention of the staff members the grapes were taken away for chopping and returned to the child.
3. A 2nd microwave used for re-heating food for the children in the pre-school room was stored on top of the low-level fridge posing a risk of injury to children.
4. The corners of the low-level worktop surrounding the sink in the pre-school room had sharp corners posing a risk of injury to the children.
5. The handrails in place on the stairs used by the children in the pre-school room were not positioned at children's level posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

6. On discussion with the staff regarding the management of shared cots for the children, it was established that the cots are not sanitized down between each use posing a risk of cross infection.
7. The vents located in the downstairs sanitary and nappy changing accommodation and in the sanitary accommodation upstairs serving the pre-school room were unclean posing a risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

8. A stackable bed was used for sleeping a 19-month child in the designated sleep area in the Butterfly room on inspection. A sleep plan set out by the service with evidence of parental engagement and parental consent was not on file in respect of the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.- 5. The 6 highchairs were removed from the room following the inspection, they are now stored in the main hall. The chairs will remain outside of the room and will only be used in the room during times for the purpose intended.

All food entering the building that is supplied by the parents will be checked prior to it being served to the children. Following the inspection, correspondence was issued to all parents to remind them to ensure that all food is chopped as is required. At a staff meeting the issue was addressed to highlight the importance of eliminating any choking hazards for children, in particular with reference to grapes. All the children's lunch boxes will be checked before giving the food to the children.

The need for the 2nd microwave in the room was discussed with the staff. It was concluded that the microwave in question is not in demand currently, it was removed from the room. If the microwave will be required again, it will be returned to the room and stored in the press unit and connected to a power source.

Corner protectors were fitted to the corners of the worktop. Additional protectors are on the premises if required in the future to prevent risk of injury to children from sharp corners.

An additional handrail at a lower level has been placed in the stairwell to assist children to access the upstairs and prevent any risk of injury.

Infection Control:

6. 7. Since this was brought to the attention of the staff on the day of the inspection a cleaning sheet documenting the times of sanitisation between use is in place. The cots are cleaned down and sanitised between each use to prevent cross infection, the staff are required to sign the cleaning sheets when the cots have been cleaned.

The vents have been cleaned and will be cleaned on a regular basis. The vents are included on the weekly cleaning sheets.

Safe Sleep:

8. Following the inspection a completed and a signed sleep plan was submitted to the early years inspectorate in respect of the child in question. A new file is in place for children's sleep plans which parents and staff have completed. The said file will be available for inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The statements and photograph of the chairs removed from the room.
2. The statement and a copy of the letter issued to parents in respect of food items posing as a choking hazard.
3. The statement and a photograph of the microwave removed from the room.
4. A photograph of the corner protectors in place.
5. A photograph of the lower-level handrail in place.

Infection Control:

6. The statement is accepted as evidence.
7. The statement is accepted as evidence.

Safe Sleep:

8. The statement is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met.

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 ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certifications indicated that 3 staff members held current up to date training. There were 10 staff members that held current up to date Paediatric and Basic first aid training with the certifications on file.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available to the children attending. The boxes were stored at a high level out of the reach of the children, 1 wall mounted in the Butterfly room and 1 wall mounted in the pre-school room.
- (b) The first aid equipment was available to the children at all times.

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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 30/09/'24.

- A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 15.08.'24 and for the firefighting equipment was 15.04.'24.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(b) safe and secure,

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(b)

- The premise was safe and secure.
- The entrances were secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised.
- There was a designated book in operation to record any visitors to the childcare rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)

(1) There was 1 nappy changing station provided in the sanitary accommodation room located downstairs. On the day of the inspection the unit was used for 14 children requiring nappy changing ,13 children between the Rainbow and Butterfly rooms and 1 child from the pre-school room).

The requirement is 1 nappy changing station for every 11 children requiring nappy changing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

An additional changing unit will be fitted to the wall in the changing area. The expected delivery date for the unit is between 15/11/'24 and 19/11/'24.

Supporting documentation submitted

The proof of purchase for the changing unit was received.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met.