

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015KY066

Name of service: Little Acorns Kilgarvan

Address of service: Kilgarvan Childcare Action Group
Fussa
Kilgarvan
Co. Kerry

Name Of registered provider: Emma Riordan

Type of service registered:	Sessional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Full Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date of Inspection: 28 September 2022

Number of pre-school children present:	AM	24	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency
Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork.

Inspection undertaken by: Margaret Carney
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

<p>Description of Service</p>	<p>Little Acorns is a community service providing sessional and a part time day care early years childcare and education for children aged 1 to 6 years. The service operates daily from 08:30am to 14:00pm.</p> <p>The service operates from a modern, single storey, detached, purpose-built community building. It provides 2 playrooms, outdoor play areas, toilet and nappy changing facilities. There is a designated sleep room, kitchen and staff room.</p> <p>Spacious on-site parking allows for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families.</p>
<p>Staffing</p>	<p>The registered provider works directly with the children and manages the service. There are 3 additional childcare professionals and an ancillary worker enlisted in the service.</p> <p>Each staff members working directly with the children have attained Quality Qualification’s Ireland (QQI) in childcare training above Level 5.</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>Tusla’s Early Years Inspectorate (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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous inspection history • Any information received in relation to the service <p>Findings on inspection are based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff <p>This inspection was an unannounced and focused on the area of Governance, Health Welfare and Development of the Child, Safety, Premises and Facilities. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness, and compliance with administrative and legal processes.</p>

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager and 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) and (b)

The registered provider managed the service and worked directly with the children. A deputy had been appointed to deputise as required. Both the manager and the deputy were present and available to facilitate the inspection process. On review of the staff roster it was observed that both the registered provider and the deputy were on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2) (a) and (b)

There was a total of 5 adults attached to the service. This included the registered provider, 3 childcare professionals and a cleaner. There were 10 written references from past employers and from sources that the registered provider considered reputable on file. Each reference had a record of validation attached.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for each of the adults.

(d)

Police vetting was available for 1 staff member that had lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period of 6 consecutive months.

(4)

The adults employed to work directly with the children in the service each had certified documentation to indicate that they had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in a childcare course at Level 5 and above.

Noncompliance information	(2)(d) An adult working in the service did not have police vetting on file.
Corrective & preventive action submitted by the registered provider	<u>Corrective and preventive action & supporting documentation</u> The manager stated that the staff member has been unwell and unable to attend the required interview in order to obtain the necessary police vetting. A doctor's certificate was submitted to evidence this.
Summary comment	The registered provider submitted a written declaration and an up dated staffing and recruitment policy stating that that going forward, full vetting will be completed prior to an adult having access to a child in the service. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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)
At the time of the Inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2)
Little Acorns provided 2 playrooms as described below -
Pre-School Room
There were 17 children aged 3 to 6 years on a sessional basis with 7 remaining to avail of part time care.
There were 2 adults in attendance.

Creche
There were 7 children aged from 1 to 2.5 years present in this room categorized as part time with 2 adults in attendance.
The adult child ratios were correct.

(8)(a)
Staff rosters indicated that there were always 2 adults on the premises during the hours-of-service operation.

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)(a) to (i)

A sample of the children’s registration forms were reviewed, and they were found to accurately record the above information.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance information

- (1)
- (h) Both the creche and pre-school maintained an attendance register.
- (i) Details of staff rosters were displayed and available for inspection.
- (j) The pre-school room and the creche had their own record books for detailing any medications that are administered to a child attending the service. There were no entries as a new book had been commenced.
- (k) Each room had their own record book for detailing any accidents or incidents that have occurred in the service. There were no entries as a new book had been commenced in September 2022.

Part IV – Information and Recor

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance information

Comprehensive information in relation to Regulation 16(1) (b) to (g) was made available to parents and prospective parents both in hard copy and digitally.

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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance information

(1)(a) and(b)

The registered provider supported each child's learning and development within the service. This was assessed through observation, written records and in conversation with the staff members as described below –

Basic needs of the children:

- Food and drink items were supplied by the children's parents and guardians.
- Meals were offered to the children on a flexible and timely basis.
- Children had their own coat hook and space for personal belongings.
- The children in the pre-school were facilitated to use the toilet independently and reminded to hand wash.
- Nappy changing carried out frequently and in a discreet manner in the creche.
- The children had spare clothes for use in the case of emergencies or spillages.
- Bibs were available to the children in the creche.
- Children using the outdoor play areas were suitably dressed for the weather and older children gently reminded to put on their coats.
- Rest areas in both rooms were observed being used by the children for quiet time and relaxation.
- Art aprons were placed by the art area for the children to use and protect their clothes.
- There was ample clear floor space for the children to enjoy free play.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- In conversation with the registered provider, it was reported that staff members had completed further childcare training to enhance and apply learnt professional skills and practices
- The staff members worked seamlessly together, transitions were well managed and unobtrusive.
- Children were treated with a positive regard; only quiet tones were used, and good eye contact was made with the children during engagement.
- Staff members were observed sitting with the children during meals, enjoying floor play and comforting children that were feeling sad.
- The children were given ample opportunities to choose activities and given the option to enjoy extended outdoor play.

- Daily record books were manually maintained in the creche room so that the children's parents and guardians would be kept up to date with meals that their children had eaten, sleep times taken and toileting. Additional information was also included such as activities enjoyed.
- Parents and guardians were kept up to date with service information via a digital social application.
- A white board was displayed by the entrances to inform parents and guardians of activities and curricular topics.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Little Acorns operated from a purpose-built facility that provided 2 spacious playrooms. Both the creche and the pre-school room were suitably furnished with child sized tables and chairs that were clean and in a good state of repair.
- There were highchairs and low chairs available for the younger children that were also clean and well maintained.
- There were fixed and mobile display shelving units to encourage the children to choose their own play equipment and activities.
- Both rooms had designated rest areas which were furnished with low child sized couches.
- There was a wide range of books displayed in the rest areas to encourage quiet time.
- The rooms were laid out in a thematic way with a wide range of fine motor skill equipment, pretend play items, arts and crafts and small construction blocks.
- The creche had a wide range of age-appropriate play materials such as activity tables and pull along toys.
- Walls of the service displayed family photographs, birthday charts and autumnal murals.
- Both the creche and the pre-school room had direct access to their own secured outdoor playgrounds with large, canopied areas that could be used during inclement weather or for outdoor classroom activities.
- The outdoor areas were well equipped with a wide range of gross, motor skill play materials such as slides, playhouses, tunnels, and climbing frames.
- Sensory water and sand tables were available to the children with a wide range of buckets and spades.
- There was evidence of planting.
- Child friendly surfacing had been installed for the children's safety and comfort.
- At the time of the inspection the children were observed to enjoy the socialisation, songs and stories during circle time; and they were seen eagerly participating in the many gross motor skill activities in the outdoor play areas.

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

(1)(b)

- Little Acorns provided a separate sleep room in the creche area. The room was furnished with 4 standard cots which were clean and well maintained.
- The cots were suitably spaced and away from the window.
- The cots had well fitted mattresses and cot sheets.
- Duvets and pillows were not in use.
- The ambient air temperature of the sleep room registered at 20.1 degrees Celsius.
- The registered provider was observed maintaining 10-minute physical checks on a sleeping child and recording this information on a hard copy sleep log.
- Children were observed sleeping in their backs and tight clothing such as bibs had been removed.
- The registered provider explained that each child was given clean bedding for each sleep and that cots were cleaned down after each use.
- A laundry facility was available in the service for the cleaning of all bedding.
- For children over the age of 2 that required a sleep, mats and stackable beds were provided.
- Suitable rest areas had been developed in both the pre-school room and the creche. They were furnished with low couches and so that the children could opt out of scheduled activities if they so wish and relax.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and guardians supplied their children with all food and drink items. • Meals were offered in a timely manner, for example breakfast if required, regular healthy snacks and hot meals for each child staying on in the service on a part time basis. • It was reported that the service had stocks of healthy nutritious items if food had been forgotten. • Children were observed eating healthy and nutritious snacks such as fruit, yogurts, rice cakes and sandwiches. • Meals were stored in the large fridge in the kitchen and were correctly labelled with the child's name. • A microwave was available for the heating of meals. • It was observed that the staff members sat with the children during meals and assisted with opening boxes and preparing fruits. • In the creche it was observed that the children sat in a circular, sociable manner. • Colourful plates and crockery were provided. • The children in the creche room had easy access to their labelled water bottles and cups.
Non-compliance information	1.The children in the pre-school room did not have access to their drinks as they were stored in their bags in the lobby
Corrective & preventive action submitted by the registered provider	<p><u>Corrective and preventive action & supporting documentation</u></p> <p>The manager stated that the children now have access to their drinks. A photograph of a drinks station with labelled water bottles was submitted. The healthy eating policy was submitted to evidence that it had been updated with this information.</p>
Summary comment	Submitted documentation sent to the early years office was reviewed and found to satisfactorily meet the Requirements of elements of Regulation 22.

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 main gates and entrances were suitably secured so as prevent the children from leaving the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- The openable windows in the service had child safety catches installed.
- Cables and flexes were secured.
- The glazed doors to the outside area in both rooms had visibility strips applied.
- The outdoor play areas were adequately fenced and secured.
- The children did not have access to large waste bins.
- Play materials, resources and equipment were visually in a good sate of repair with no sharp edges or pinch points.

Infection control:

- Little Acorns employed a full-time cleaner that kept the service in a clean manner. A cleaning system was in place whereby cleaning of the rooms were scheduled whilst the children played outside.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained.
- Sanitising hand products were placed throughout the service, for example, in the reception area and by the playroom entrances. members.
- Tissues were available for the children's nasal hygiene.
- There were generous stocks of cleaning products.
- Tabletops were frequently cleaned, for example, after play and prior to lunches being eaten.
- The children and staff members were observed hand washing frequently.
- There were enough child sized toilets and child height wash hand basins for the number of children attending. All the facilities were clean and well maintained.
- There were step ups, toilet seats and potties for training purposes.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water, paper towels and liquid soap was available for hand washing purposes.
- Posters were placed by the wash hand basins to encourage the correct hand washing technique.
- There was 1 nappy changing unit which was clean and in a good state or repair.
- Individual labelled baskets stocked the children's toiletries and nappy supplies.
- There were generous supplies of protective gloves and single use apron.
- There was a non-contact pedal operated bin for the storage of soiled nappies.
- In each playroom there were non-contact pedal operated bins in use.
- Brushes and pans were suitably stored out of the reach of the children.

	<p>Fire Safety –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conversation with the staff members, it was stated that they were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a fire. • Firefighting equipment, such as the fire cylinders were tethered and covered to the walls. • Fire doors were unobstructed. <p>Administration of Medication –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conversation with the staff members in the pre-school room it was stated that although there were no children currently requiring medications, they were familiar with the process that is needed to be followed in order to administer medications to the children. <p>Outings –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was stated by the registered provider that outings were not currently conducted in the service.
Non-compliance information	<p>Infection control:</p> <p>The following issues posed a risk of cross infection -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The staff member designated to conduct nappy changing was seen in the creche collecting the children with gloves and single use apron on. 2. A child’s dummy was improperly stored on a ledge in the kitchen area.
Corrective & preventive action submitted by the registered provider	<p><u>Corrective and preventive action & supporting documentation submitted</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The manager stated that the nappy changing policy has been updated to reflect the correct nappy changing procedures. In addition, the staff members have been trained in this regard. A copy of the updated nappy changing policy was issued and evidence of staff training was submitted. 2.The manager stated that the children’s dummies and comforters are now stored in individual containers to avoid cross infection. A photograph of stored dummies was submitted.
Summary comment	<p>Documentation in the form of policies and photographs were submitted to the early years office in a timely manner, They were reviewed and found to satisfactorily meet the Requirements of the subsections that were found non-compliant in Regulation 23.</p>

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)
Three members of staff had certified evidence of completed first aid responder (FAR) training. The expiry dates ranged from January to July 2024.
- (2)(a) and (b)
Both the pre-school room and the creche had their own first aid boxes. They were stored on high shelves in the kitchen area, out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff.
The first aid box in the pre-school room was inspected and found to be generously stocked.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.

Compliance information

- (1)
The service made available a record in writing of the following –
- (a) Monthly fire drills conducted; the last recorded drill was dated June 2022.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The last recorded service took place on the 6 October 2021.
 - (4) Fire evacuation plans were clearly displayed in each of the playrooms and in the lobby.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance information

The service displayed an up-to-date insurance certificate in the office area which detailed that up to 27 children were insured to attend at any one time. The expiry date was March 2023.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance information

- (a)
Little Acorns occupied a modern, detached 2 storey building, which was visually clean and well maintained. The building was visually of sound and stable structure with no defects identified.
- (b)
The service was safe and secured. The main entrance and the internal doors were electronically operated. The garden was secured with well-maintained galvanised metal fencing.
- (c)
Strip lighting provided the playrooms and ancillary rooms with adequate lighting. The sleep room was suitably darkened for sleeping children.
The service heating was not in use on the day.
The windows in the both rooms were openable and allowed for natural light and ventilation.
There was no indications of condensation or malodorous smells.
- (d)
The service was found to be cleaned and well maintained.
- (e)
There were enough toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing facilities for the number of children attending. They were clean and in a good state of repair. Wash hand basins had thermostatically controlled hot water at 40 degrees Celsius.
Additional sink units were situated in each playroom for clear up and in the pre-school room a low child height sink unit was installed for the children to use after painting and messy play.
There was a wheelchair access toilet on the premises and the staff members had their own toilet facility.

Non compliance information

- (c)
The light bulbs in the children's toilet facility in the pre-school room were not covered posing a risk of the bulbs smashing.

<p>Corrective & preventive action submitted by the registered provider</p>	<p><u>Corrective and preventive action & supporting documents submitted</u> The manager stated that a new light fitting has been installed. A photograph of a flush ceiling light fitting was submitted.</p>
<p>Summary comment</p>	<p>The breach has been suitably addressed as proven by the photographic evidence which has been submitted to the early years office. The Requirement has been met.</p>

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance information

(1) and (2)

The service provided ample clear floor space for the number of children attending on a full day care basis to participate in free play, enjoy the planned activities and socialise and explore the outdoor play area in a supervised manner