

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH048		
Name of Service:	Lios na nOg Playgroup CLG		
Address of Service:	St. Joseph School Campus, Tom Bellew Avenue, Dundalk, Co. Louth		
Eircode:	A91 NC89		
Name of Registered Provider:	Dr Rosalyn Morris		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	05/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	66	PM 8
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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		

Description of service

Lios na nÓg Playgroup CLG has been operating as a community based childcare service since December 1998. The service provides Sessional, Part-time, Full Day and school-aged childcare and education to children from 2 years to 6 years of age. This not-for-profit service caters for a maximum of 121 pre-school children and operates from 08:00 to 17:30 daily. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:00hrs to 12:30 each weekday.

The service is located on the grounds of St. Josephs National School in a residential area of Dundalk, Co. Louth. The premises consists of a total of 6 care rooms, 4 of which are located within the main building and 2 rooms which are located in a pre-fabricated structure to the rear of the main building. Each care room has adjoining sanitary accommodation. The service also has access to outdoor play facilities on site.

Staffing

There were twenty adults working directly with the preschool children when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. The service manager who is also the designated person in charge and deputy person in charge were also on the premises. Two additional adults were on the premises one who was engaged in catering duties and one who was engaged in administrative duties.

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.

On inspection additional non-compliances which posed a significant risk were identified under regulation 23.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance. As a result, the scope of the inspection focused on rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4 and did not include Prefab Rooms 1 and 2.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the service manager, 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 service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The service manager who is the designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were both on the premises when the inspectors arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) Following a service file review and a discussion with the service manager it was confirmed to the inspectors that there were 9 new staff members present in the service since the last inspection.

The staff files in relation to the 9 new staff members were reviewed on the day of inspection and included the following:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or other source available for all 9 new members of staff in the service.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 9 new staff members.

(d) Documentary evidence of processed international police vetting was available for the 1 new member of staff who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months.

(4) Eight staff members held 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.

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) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the day of the inspection when the inspectors arrived at the service at 11:30 the following care rooms were in operation:

- Room 1: There were 3 adults working directly with the 10 pre-children present.
- Room 2: There were 4 adults working directly with the 12 pre-school children present.
- Room 3: There were 4 adults with working directly with the 10 pre-school children present.
- Room 4: There were 2 adults working directly with the 6 pre-school children present on a full day care basis.
- Pre-fab Room 1: There were 3 adults working directly with the 15 pre-school children present.
- Pre-fab Room 2: There were 4 adults working directly with the 13 pre-school children present.

There were an additional 4 adults present in the service including the service manager, the deputy person in charge, one adult who was engaged in catering duties and one adult who was engaged in administrative duties.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records, this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Although no child was observed to sleep on the day of the inspection, day beds were available for any child who required them. A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.

(3) (a) **Outdoor Areas:**

Each of the playrooms had a change of environment to the outdoor area during the inspection. The children have access to 5 separate outdoor play areas on the premises. Each of the areas were gated and fenced and had a safety mat surface. The areas had a variety of interest areas and accessible toys and equipment including a climbing frame with bridge and 2 slides, blackboards, tyres, hoops, ride on toys and cars, wall mounted water shoots, tunnels and balls. There was also a “playground communication board” and one area was partially covered for use in all types of weather. Sheds were also in use for the storage of additional equipment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- In each of the care rooms there was a variety of play materials and equipment. The equipment was suited to the ages and stages of development of the children present and promoted many areas of child development. The play equipment was stored on low level open shelving which was accessible to the children. Additional equipment and materials were also available in the storeroom and the service manager reported that toys are rotated on a regular basis.
- In the playrooms the toys and equipment available was divided into specific areas of interest including the home area, the construction area, the art gallery, sensory play area which included sand and water trays. Each of these areas were supported with equipment and materials that enhanced the play experience for the children and promoted areas of development. There were also a variety of toy boxes that included blocks, animals, transport toys, and wall mounted activity centres. Room 3 had a climbing frame with steps and a slide. A rest and reading area with a variety of books, soft seats and mats were also available in each room. A sensory pod was available in the service and was located in the main hallway. The children can access this when they require it.
- Evidence of the children’s artwork was on display in each of the rooms which included free colouring and sticking pictures.

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

On the day of the inspection the lunch time dinner was provided at 12:20 and was observed to consist of pizza and garlic bread. The staff reported that most other days hot meals provided are supplied by an external catering company and re-heated by the service. The morning breakfast was reported to consist of cereals and juice and the morning snack consisted of yoghurts and fresh fruit. The afternoon snack was reported to consist of rolls with jam and butter.

Potable drinking water was available for the children to access as required in all rooms.

Staff assisted children as necessary with their meals and snacks in the care rooms. Independence was also promoted, with the children encouraged to pour their own drinks and also with tidying up. Mealtimes were observed to be sociable with the staff observed sitting at the tables with the children and engaging in conversation about their family, siblings and what their plans were for the weekend.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service. The following observations were made:

General Safety:

1. The room temperature of Room 4 exceeded the recommended room temperature of 18-22 °C. For example: Room 4 felt warm and stuffy at 12:40 and the room temperature recorded by the inspector was 23.5° C. It is acknowledged that the staff did take the children outside for a period of time.
2. In Room 4 sharp edges were exposed on a low-level shelf which is a potential injury hazard.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. The window is opened to allow free flowing air into the room. The door leading to the outdoor area will be opened once a risk benefit/assessment is completed.
In addition, the following actions have been implemented;
 - Change the use of a mercury thermometer to a digital thermometer to ensure a more accurate temperature reading.
 - Increase our temperature checks in the room from once daily to more frequently as necessary; especially depending on weather conditions.
 - The compliance administrator and in her absence senior management will complete spot checks on the temperature of the room.
2. Corner guards were placed on the shelf.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of corner guards

Summary Comment

The service manager submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information remedial actions have been taken to address the non-compliances. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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) Documentary evidence was provided to demonstrate that a member of staff with an up to date FAR qualification is available to the children at all times.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms and were located in a cabinet where they are easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

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) A record was maintained of the monthly fire drills which had been completed in the service.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 18/04/2023 and the smoke alarms on 10/07/2022 and 10/02/2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place for a maximum of 124 children attending the service on a full day care basis up until the 27/3/24.