

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH057
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little People Pre-School
-------------------------	--------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Foy Centre, Dundalk Road, Carlingford, Co. Louth
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	A91 D42A
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eimile Rice
-------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	07/10/2025
-------------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM	11
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.Flood
<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.
---------------------------------	-----------------

### Description of service

Little People Pre-School is a privately owned service in operation in its current location since August 2012 and under the management of the current registered provider since September 2019. The service provides part-time and sessional care & education to pre-school children from 2 to 6 years of age.

The service is conducted from a community centre located in the town of Carlingford, Co. Louth. The service consists of 1 playroom that is subdivided into 2 areas. Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary accommodation, storage, access to an activities hall within the community building and an enclosed outdoor play area which is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service employs 5 childcare staff including the registered provider who work directly with the pre-school children attending the service. A student also attends the service one day a week on placement.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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 would like 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 who is also the registered provider and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

(c) When questioned the staff present were familiar with the management structure within the service.

(2) Seven files were presented for inspection and included the registered provider, 4 childcare staff, 1 student who attends the service on a placement and 1 contracted worker. The following were reviewed:

(a)(b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all 7 adults.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 7 adults. The registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Following a review of the files presented on the day of inspection international police vetting was available for the contracted activities teacher.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that the registered provider and 4 staff members who work directly with the preschool children had at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.40am and remained so throughout the inspection. The large care room was divided into 2 separate areas which included:

- **Senior Preschool area:** Two adults (including the registered provider) were working directly with the 8 pre-school children present, aged between 3 - 4 years.

- **Junior Preschool area:** Two adults were working directly with the 10 pre-school children present, aged between 2 - 3 years.

(8) Following a review of the staff rota and attendance records this demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were always 2 staff on the premises.

### 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:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (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) The following records were present for inspection and reviewed:

- (a) Documentary evidence was on display in the service containing the names, qualifications and experience of all staff present. In addition, curriculum vitae were available in the staff files presented for inspection.
- (h) A written record was available of the arrival and departure times for the children attending the service daily.
- (i) Documentary evidence was available of a weekly staff roster which was reflective of the staff present in the service. The staff also documented their arrival and departure times on a daily basis.
- (j) No medication was administered during the inspection. Documentary records were available detailing the previous administration of medication for one child. This form was complete and contained all the required information.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k)

The practices of recording incidents that occurred in the service were inappropriate and not in accordance with the services policy on accidents and incidents. This was observed by the following findings from inspection:

1. An incident occurred on the day of inspection, where a child tripped, fell and banged their head; an incident form was not completed at or near the time of the incident. Upon collection, an incident record was not available to provide to the child's parent, and the parent was not verbally informed about the incident.
2. A sample of 4 accident and incident records for the previous 12 months were reviewed, including the record for a notification of incident that was received by the inspectorate. Three out of 4 of the records did not contain a parental signature indicating that the parents had been informed about incident and 1 of the records contained no staff, managerial or parental signatures.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. An incident report form was filled out on the day of the inspection after the inspector left. It was shown to the child's mother, and the register provider went through it with her and it was signed.  
  
Incident reports will always be filled out, in the case of an accident and the register provider will ensure that it is completed and signed by a parent.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of completed accident & incident form

### Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted and the assurances given that the registered provider will monitor the completion of the accident and incident forms, the non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## 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) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

The large playroom was divided into 2 areas namely, The Junior Preschool area and Senior Preschool area.

#### Basic needs:

- The children were observed to move freely in the care room. All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area, and the children were dressed appropriately for going outside.
- Nappies were observed to be changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discrete supervision was provided, and gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- Snack time was observed to be a social, interactive occasion with the children observed seated at the tables and the staff present providing assistance if they required it. During this time the children and staff were observed to chat about their lunches and what they all liked.
- Some of the children were observed to access the soft cushions after snack time and to sit and read a book. The sensory quiet area in the Junior Preschool area was accessed by the children as the required it or to read a story.

#### Supporting Relationships

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff present. The staff were supportive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours. Minor behavioural issues were addressed and not allowed to escalate e.g. staff were observed to use timers and redirection strategies.

- Communication with parents was mainly at drop of and collection times. A written record was also available for some children detailing their activities and care needs at preschool. The staff also confirmed that photographs and information are shared through a small media messaging service. Scrap books are in development for each child in the service and are a collation of the child's learning and experiences in the service. These are sent home as a 'keepsake' at the end of the year. 'Learning records' that include a photograph and documented learning achievement for each child are completed regularly and are also sent home to parents for review and comment.
- Individual plans for children who required additional supports in the service were available and were being implemented. The plan reviewed during the inspection, detailed a multidisciplinary plan for a child and the strategies being implemented to promote the child's learning and development in the service.
- The staff report regular staff meetings and a staff messaging group are used to share information with each other and also to plan activities and learning plans for the children.

### 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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

#### General Safety:

- The external and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.
- The outdoor play area was gated and secured with fencing to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger. Foam padding had also been placed on the sharp window edges to protect the children from impact hazards.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving.

#### Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and paper towels to support effective hand washing practices.
- Frequent hand washing practices were observed to be carried out after toileting and nappy changing, outdoor play and before snack times.
- Staff were observed to wear appropriate disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and were observed to wash both the child's and their own hands after each nappy change.
- Tabletops were cleaned down before and after snack time.
- When questioned the staff were familiar with the cleaning procedures for toys and equipment in the service in accordance with best practice guidelines. A 'mouthed toy' box was observed in use in the care room for the storage of mouthed toys that had been removed for washing.

### Safe Sleep:

- No child was observed to sleep during the inspection.

### 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 based on the following observations made during the inspection:

#### General Safety:

1. There was insufficient safety impact surface under the climbing frame in the outdoor area. This is a potential injury risk.
2. A number of sharp corners were exposed on low level shelving and storage units in the care room.

#### Infection Control:

3. The nappy bin observed in use for the disposal of soiled nappies in the sanitary area was considered unsuitable. The bin observed in use required the staff to handle it a number of times during the disposal process, opening the lid by hand, placing the nappy inside the bin. Disposable nappies should be disposed of in a foot-operated, lined, lidded bin that is leak proof. This is an infection control and cross contamination risk.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## Corrective & Preventive Actions

### General Safety:

1. New mats have been ordered for underneath the climbing frame that are suitable for the concrete area in the garden. The garden is out of bounds until these mats are fitted.

The mats will be kept in good condition.

2. The sharp corners are covered by corner protectors and foam covers.

Sharp covers will always be covered.

### Infection Control:

3. A new foot pedal waterproof bin has been purchased. This will always be covered with a bin liner.

The Registered provider will always ensure to have the correct bin.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted and the non-compliances 2 & 3 have been adequately addressed.

In relation to non-compliance 1, the inspectorate accepts the registered providers assurances that the garden is inaccessible to the children until the required safety surface underneath the climbing frame has been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's safety instructions. As such the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions detailed will require assessment 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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for four adults in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service. It was stored in conspicuous location where it is easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

*(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required,*

### Non-Compliance Information

(c)

1. A strong odour was present in the 2 sanitary areas and extended into the adjoining lobby and storage area. This is a recurring non-compliance from the last inspection that was carried out on 17/01/2023. The corrective and preventative actions submitted at this time in response to the non-compliance have not removed or rectified the lingering odour which still persists.

(d)

2. The cover of the ceiling mounted ventilation fan was covered in a thick layer of dirt and dust.

### Corrective and Preventive Actions

- (C)
1. The drain on the outside of the building was emptied, any surplus water in the shower drain and bathrooms was cleaned out. Due to the showers not in use, the plumber has informed the register provider to pour boiling water and disinfectant into the drains on a daily basis. This process has now been incorporated into the daily cleaning routine. The registered provider has acknowledged upon do so over the past few weeks that the odour has now subsided.  
The register provider has ensured that this daily process of disinfecting the drains will continue.

- (d)
2. The vent was cleaned and is working properly.  
The register provider will ensure that the vent will remain dust free.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence

### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted and the assurances given by the registered provider the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 have been adequately addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions detailed will require assessment at the next inspection.