

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK115		
Name of Service:	Little Treasures Creche		
Address of Service:	Racefield Centre Fr Russell Road Limerick		
Eircode:	V94Y240		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Hanley, Shelia Horan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/10/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	87	PM 87
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick		
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan M Riordan		
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

Little Treasures is open from Monday to Friday between 07.15hrs and 18.00 hrs offering fulltime care and part-time care including a 3-hour sessional service (09:30 – 12:30 hours, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year) under the early childhood care and education scheme. The service operates from a single storey building located to the rear of a small shopping area. It has 6 playrooms in operation for the preschool school children, bathroom facilities for the children and adults, a designated sleep room and an office. Facilities for outdoor play are available on site.

Staffing

There were 20 adults documented on the staff roster with 19 staff present on the day of inspection and of these 15 were working directly with the children. The registered providers were present and available as required.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25 and 26.

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 registered providers, 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) There was a person in charge and a named person to deputise as required was available.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived and was documented on the staff roster.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place. This was clearly documented on the staff roster. Lines of authority and accountability were evident in the service.

The following documents were available on file for all staff.

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available in respect of all staff and were dated within the last three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for staff who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The staff working directly with the children attending the service held awards in early childhood care and education between levels 5 and 8 on the national qualifications framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 15 staff working across 5 care rooms with 83 preschool children present. During the period of inspection, the minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each care room.

1. Crawlers and Wobblers Room – There were 10 children (1-2yrs) and 2 staff

2. Toddlers Room – There were 11 children (2-3yrs) and 2 staff

3. Preschool Room – There were 18 children (2-3yrs) and 3 staff

4. Pre Montessori Room - There were 24 children (3-4yrs) and 3 staff

5. Senior Montessori Room - There were 24 children (3-4yrs) and 3 staff

The registered providers and additional members of staff were available to relieve staff to take their meal breaks, for kitchen duties and office management.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS:

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The food was provided by the service and prepared fresh each day for the children attending full day care and part time care provision. The service ensured that all children attending received a nutritious and varied diet, which took their individual needs and preferences into consideration. Children who arrived at the service early had breakfast.

Chopped fruit varieties of sliced oranges, apples and bananas was served with a choice of milk and water for morning break. Dinner consisted of beef stew, vegetables, gravy and mash potatoes. Tuna fish and crackers was served for the afternoon snack.

Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack and meal without being rushed. Children sat at low tables and had their lunch in an environment that promoted social interaction with their peers and the adults, and the atmosphere was relaxed and unhurried. Drinking water was available and accessible in each room on low level shelving throughout the day if required by children. A drinks tray was taken outside to the outdoor play area to ensure children had access to water while playing outdoors.

Nappy changing took place at regular intervals and staff were observed to follow the nappy changing policy which was clearly displayed in each nappy changing area. All toiletries required at changing times were stored within easy reach of staff close to the changing unit. All children had a change of clothes at the service if required. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation and in the rooms with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap.

The group were allowed to move freely indoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. A designated rest/quiet area was available in all rooms should a child need to rest and have some quiet time, and children were observed to use the rest area whenever they choose to.

There was a plentiful supply of play props available to support imaginative and creative play in the defined interest areas in the kitchen/home corner, construction area, dress up area, rest area, art/craft area and jigsaw section.

Childrens self-care needs were supported where they were observed to put on and take off their coats and hang them up after their use when they returned to the room. Mark making and fine motor skills were supported where children were colouring pictures. Staff moved between tables to work with individual children on a one-to-one basis. Children were observed to make choices in relation to play activities and had their choices respected. Staff were observed to sit at the tables at the child's eye level, used soft tones of voice, addressed children by their first name and supported them to complete activities they had chosen.

The key person system was observed in operation in each room of the service. Staff members engaged with their designated smaller group. This reduced the number of children in any one area at any given time. This created a quiet, calm environment allowing children have more space and more one to one attention with their staff during the day.

The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The staff modelled positive behaviour for the children, and they were praised for their good behaviour. Interactions with the children were positive and caring.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Rooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials. Children were observed to choose play materials, complete an activity independently and replace the equipment to its designated place on the shelving.

Adult sized couches were available in all rooms where children could rest/ relax in and have some quiet time if they choose to opt out of an activity. Good supplies of books were available which helped support language development and numeracy.

Children were observed colouring pictures and drawing which supported mark making activities. The curriculum theme involved activities related to Halloween. Circle time involved all the group singing songs together and this activity was enjoyed by the children. Sensorial play activities were evident as sand boxes with buckets, shovels and additional play props were open and accessible in all rooms. Art easels with paint brushes, paint and paper were evident in the rooms and children were observed to paint freely. A multipurpose activity room with a large sand box, ball pool, tables and chairs and couch were used by different groups of children on a rota basis during the day.

The walls of the rooms were decorated with posters and the children's artwork.

Facilities were available for outdoor play. Children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection and were supervised by staff at this time. A designated safe space was available in the outdoor area for the younger children. Within this area children had access to bicycles, trikes, balance bikes, bubble cars and scooters. A sheltered area was also provided outdoors facilitating children getting outside each day regardless of weather conditions. Within this area of the service children had access to art and craft materials, mud kitchens, a large sand pit, interactive wall puzzles, blackboards, low level slides and age-appropriate tables and chairs. The larger area outdoors was used by the older children. Lots of free open space was accessible for running, climbing, using swings and slides and enjoying the freedom of play in the large play gems provided. All areas outdoors were covered with rubber matting. This made the area accessible in all weather conditions and it reduced the risk of injury to children in the outdoor play spaces.

A large notice board was located in the front main hallway of the service. Here lots of information was shared with parents. The weekly menu plan for the service was displayed. Details of healthy snacks and lunch ideas were on demonstrated. The services Statement of Purpose and information on Síolta was attached. Graduation photographs taken at the end of each school year were clearly displayed on the notice board.

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:

On arrival to the service, the entrance door leading into the pre-school facility was locked. Access to the building was controlled by the registered providers from the manager's office within the building. All emergency exits and fire doors were secured and were unobstructed in the building. A fob was required to open all internal doors to each room in the service. High level magnetic locks were located on all room doors. This prevented children exiting the service unsupervised. Restrictive opening devices were in place on all low-level windows. All blind cords were safely secured in the building. All toys and play equipment were safe for the age group using them, appeared in good condition and were free from pinch and crush points, exposed bolts or any sharp edges. Lots of foot pedal operated, bins were available in each room for the safe disposal of all waste. Regular risk assessment checks were carried out on all internal and external areas of the building to ensure that areas were free from hazards that had potential to cause harm to a child.

Infection Control:

A good standard of operational hygiene was observed in all areas of the premises both in the internal environment and in all outdoor play areas. Hot water, liquid antibacterial soap and paper hand towels were available at all wash and basins to ensure hygienic washing of hands. Children were observed hand washing after outdoor play, after using the bathroom, when finished messy play activities and before mealtimes.

Administration of Medication: Written parental consent was given for the administration of all medications prescribed or over the counter to any child in the service. All medicines were checked by two staff members and details of the medicine administered were clearly documented in writing and shared with parents.

Safe Sleep: A sleep room with 10 standard cots was located close to the Wobbler room. Individual bed linen was available for each child and where more than one child used the same cot bed linen was changed between each use. All mattresses had waterproof mattress covers in place. All cots were in good condition and sturdy. Each was

located a safe distance apart. Lightening in the room was dimmed with blackout blinds available on all windows. A staff member stayed in the room with children while they slept. Regular checks were carried out on each child and all observations on sleeping children were recorded.

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 providers had ensured that staff held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR) for children with 15 staff having completed FAR training recently.

(2)(a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes safely stored and easily accessible in the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available at all times if required for a child.

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.

(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)(a) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 13/09/2024.

(b)The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in March 2024, and a record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The fire and smoke alarm system were tested and serviced in September 2024.

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