

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LK116

Name of Service: Little Wonders

Address of Service: Boherbue, Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick.

Eircode: V42XN25

Name of Registered Provider: Eleanor O'Sullivan

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 02/04/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	23

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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

Description of service

This early years full day care service first opened in 1998. It is a private service which provides sessional, part-time and full day education and care to preschool children aged 12 months to 5 years of age. School aged services are also provided to school aged children. The service operates from 08.00am to 05.30pm and the setting caters for a maximum of 35 children. There are 5 playrooms, sanitary facilities, a sleep room, kitchen and an outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service employs seven adults which includes the registered provider. Six staff members working in the service have qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from QQI Level 5 to level 8. An additional staff member is assigned to cooking and cleaning 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 the child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,24,25,26 and 28.

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 wishes 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*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge or the deputy person in charge were available on the premises.
- (2) The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all staff employed.
- (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 in respect of each person. Garda vetting was updated for all staff and was completed within the last three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.
- (4) Six staff had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8.

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

- (1) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) On the day of the inspection there were 5 staff working with 24 children present in the morning 5 staff working and 23 children present in the afternoon. 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 room.

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:

A healthy eating policy was available in the service. Foods and snacks were provided by the service to all preschool children in attendance. Children attending on a sessional basis had the option of bringing in snacks from home. Dinner served consisted of pasta, mince and vegetables. Snacks consisted of sandwiches and a selection of fresh fruit was also available.

Toilet training was based on the child's stage of development and their readiness to start training rather than their age.

Rest areas were provided in the playrooms for children to relax and enjoy the company of the adults present or to have some quiet time on their own.

Staff were observed interacting well with the children, using soft tones of voice, using the child's name and getting down to their level and making eye contact. Positive affirming language was used by staff at all times.

Timetables of activities were displayed in each room and were based on children's emergent interests. Two jars of tadpoles were available and were going to be included in a learning theme for all the children in the service.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

This full day care service was operated from a two-storey building. The service comprised of 5 playrooms, sanitary accommodation areas, a sleep room and an outdoor play area which had been subdivided in to two separate areas. Adequate and varied play equipment suited to the age and stage of development of the child was available in each room of the service and in the outdoor play area. Surplus play equipment was in storage and used on a rotational basis following cleaning. All children had wellingtons and wet gear available to use in the outdoor play area in poor weather conditions. Defined interest areas in each room included a reading area, construction area, home corner, dress up clothes, puzzles, buggies, manipulative play area and small world area.

All of the children in the service were observed playing in the secure outdoor play area which was well resourced with outdoor play equipment such as playhouses, picnic benches, ride on toys, kitchens, climbing frames and sand boxes. A roofed area was erected which allowed more outdoor play in adverse weather conditions.

A group of children were observed writing with chalk on an outdoor blackboard which supported their mark making and writing skills.

Another group of children were observed playing outdoors at the tuft tray which contained sensory play materials.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Rest areas were evident in each room which consisted of child sized couches where children were observed to have quiet time and relax.

The sleep room contained eight standard cots which were in a good state of repair and had safety mattresses with waterproof protectors.

Staff were aware of safe sleep guidelines and the physical checks on each sleeping child were recorded every 10 minutes.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Each child who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member on arrival and on departure.

(3)(a) No persons other than the following could enter the service without being approved by a staff member.

(i) A pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A visitor book was maintained which recorded the name of every adult who entered the service, the time they spent in the service, the reason they entered, contact phone numbers and the person who allowed them enter.

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) There were two staff present that had completed the current first aid response certification for children.
- (2) (a) First aid boxes were accessible and safely stored in the service.
(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by 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, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 12/03/2024.
(b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in November 2023, 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 April 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway of 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 available to cover the number of children attending.