

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK171
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Name of Service:	Tall Trees Childcare Springfield
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Address of Service:	Springfield, Old Singland Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 K577
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	25/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	81	PM	53
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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
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Description of service

This is a privately owned full day care service which first opened in 2007.

The service provides sessional, part-time and full day education and care to preschool children.

The premises are a purpose built, two storey childcare facilities located in the outskirts of Limerick city close to shops, schools and residential settings.

The service has 6 playrooms in operation, one sleep room, a kitchen, nappy changing and sanitary facilities for children and adults and outdoor play areas to the back of the premises.

A school aged service is also available on the premises.

Staffing

There were 17 staff working directly with the preschool children across 6 playrooms.

The person in charge and the deputy person are available on site too if required and an additional 2 staff are working in the kitchen and on cleaning duties.

The staff working with the children all have childcare qualifications which range from QQI Level 5 to Level 8.

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.

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 person in charge, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.

(2) The files of 2 new staff who had recently commenced working in the service were viewed on the day of inspection. All previous files were viewed on the previous inspection dated the 7th of December 2023.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for these 2 staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the two new staff employed to work at the service. The Garda vetting for all the other employees were available on file.

(d) Police vetting was available for the 1 staff member who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such 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.

Compliance Information

(2) There were 81 pre-school children aged 1 – 6 years being supervised by 17 staff working across 6 playrooms at the time of the inspection.

The adult/child ratio in all areas was correct and there were sufficient relief staff to assist at busy periods and to cover staff break times throughout the day.

The person in charge and the deputy person were also available on site too if required and an additional 2 staff were working in the kitchen and on cleaning duties.

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. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh each day and were served at regular intervals to the children in their individual rooms. On the day of the inspection pasta with meatball was served for dinner. Second helpings were available if required. Appropriate cutlery and crockery were used appropriate to the age and stage of development of each child.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to each room in the service. Since the previous inspection the nappy changing facilities was upgraded near the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Easily accessible, waist high, changing units were available. Steps for older children to access the units were provided. All toiletries for the children were safely stored and clearly labelled and were located within easy reach of the staff when changing the children's nappies. Nappy changing policies were clearly displayed on the wall close to the change mats.

Sanitary accommodation for the older children was located next to each of the pre-school rooms. Children using the facilities could be supervised at all times by sight or by sound for short intervals while using the toilets.

There was a separate sleep room available with a sufficient number of standard cots accessible at all times to the children in the Wobbler/Toddler rooms. The children over 2 years were observed sleeping in the Toddler room on low level beds. Staff stayed with these children while they were asleep. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all sleep checks were recorded. Relaxation areas were provided in all rooms of the creche with comfortable seating, soft floor mats, blankets and cushions accessible. These rest areas provided cosy spaces for children to relax and take time out and away from active play areas when tired. Staff throughout the service encouraged quiet periods during the day to facilitate child's need for comfort, rest and relaxation.

Outdoor play was encouraged for all age groups and children were observed to be outdoors for long periods before and after their meals and snacks.

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:

Since the last inspection the service have introduced a policy where amber beads were not permitted to be worn by the children while attending the creche. The staff were updated on this change in policy.

Infection Control:

Since the last inspection the nappy changing policy was amended to include adults to wash their hands before and after each nappy changing procedure and that children's hands will be washed after their nappy has been change too.

The children and staff were observed washing their hands following outdoor play and before dinner time. The nappy changing policy was updated and displayed in the sanitary facility.

There was a new pedal operated bin in place for the safe hygienic disposal of nappies.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

The fire emergency exit door from the Tigers playroom had a child's stair gate in place. This was erected at the time of covid when the preschool children in this room used this exit door only for entering and leaving their room instead of the main entrance area. This practice has continued to date. Staff stated that this was required to prevent a child getting unsupervised exit from the building.

This posed a risk to the safety of both staff and children in the event of a fire emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

In the response from the registered provider, it was stated that the gate has been removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

Photo attached

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted to the early years inspectorate was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23 Fire Safety.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The nappy changing facility had renovation work done since the last inspection. It was extended and an additional portable nappy unit with steps was added . There was a new pedal operated bin in place for the safe disposal of nappies.

An additional 2 toilets and 2 wash handbasins were installed for the preschool children in the Lions and the Giraffes playrooms.