

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK186		
Name of Service:	TLC Childcare		
Address of Service:	116 Templegreen, Station Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.		
Eircode:	V42 P635		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Hester		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional.		
Date of Inspection:	26/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM 42
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd 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

TLC Childcare is a private early years service which first opened in July 2012. It provides sessional, part-time and full day education and care to preschool children aged 1 - 5 years of age. School aged services are no longer provided to school aged children. The service operates from 08.00hrs to 17.30hrs and the setting caters for a maximum of 46 preschool children. It operates from a purpose-built building in an urban residential area. There are 4 care rooms in operation: Bumblebee room (6 months – 1.5 years), Ladybird room (1.5-2.5 years), Butterfly room (3.5- 6 years) and Caterpillar room (2 - 3.5 years). There is a dedicated sleep room with cots for children aged less than 2 years. The service has a large outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment. All cooking and preparation of food takes place at a second service operated by the registered provider at Woodfield, Killeline, Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick.

Staffing

The service employs 12 staff and all staff members have childcare qualifications.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Childcare 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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,21,23,25 and 29.

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 provider, 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.*

(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 and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.

(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 12 staff members and were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(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 all staff. All garda vetting was completed in the last 3 years.

(d) International police vetting was available for persons who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) All staff had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 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) At all times during the period of the inspection the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of the inspection there were 9 staff working with and supervising 42 children in the morning and there were 8 staff supervising 42 children in the afternoon.

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:

The healthy eating policy of the service detailed a well-balanced and nutritious menu. The full time cook freshly prepared all meals daily. Dinner consisted of chicken, vegetables and mashed potatoes and chicken curry was available for the older children. Most children were observed to self-feed and were given assistance by staff when required. The menu for the day was displayed at the entrance to the service for all parents to see. This facilitated good communication between the service and parents.

Drinking water was available throughout the day in each room if a child was thirsty and needed a drink. Children sat together at the low-level tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat and enjoy their food.

The children who were toilet trained toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it.

Children in nappies were changed regularly by staff whilst following the nappy change policy.

The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation which had a supply of hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid antibacterial soap. Staff were observed to wash their hands regularly throughout the day.

Children could rest and relax as desired throughout the day in each room, in the library area on adult and child sized couches, cushions and on floor mats. Each room appeared homely, comfortable and inviting for the children as additional floor mats and seating were provided.

Children under 2 years of age slept in traditional type cots and were observed to be checked by staff every 10 minutes in line with the safe sleep policy of the service.

Wobblers were observed to be held and cuddled and their positions were changed regularly. The service had a policy of introducing beakers at an early age and children had generally progressed from using bottles by 12 months of age.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement within each room and in the outdoor play area. The outdoor play space was used at intervals throughout the day and supported childrens physical activity and social interaction. The children were encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service was operated from a purpose-built building in an urban area.

Rooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Shelving units were also used effectively as room dividers to create play spaces, such as the library area, home corner, construction area, small world area, art area. sand play area and tabletop activities area. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials.

Treasure baskets of natural materials were available for the younger children which helped support sensorial development.

The walls of the rooms and the display board outside the rooms were decorated with posters and the childrens artwork.

Facilities for outdoor play were available and there was good choice of play equipment and children organised their own play activities which supported their social development. The area was surrounded by high walls and gated. Outdoor play equipment included a large climbing frame, bikes, trikes, ride on toys and playhouses.

Children were observed playing in small groups, climbing and running about.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the bumble bee room, there was an over reliance on the use of plastic toys where the batteries were not working.
2. There was limited clear floor space in the bumble bee room for babies to learn to sit, crawl and walk as there was an excessive amount of large play equipment in the room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Battery operated toys will be phased out and all non-working toys have been removed.
2. The bumblebee indoor environment has been decluttered and rearranged.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to the changes made.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 19(1)(a).

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.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Dolls in the ladybird room were observed to be dirty, unclothed, had parts missing and were not in a condition to support meaningful play.
2. Reading books that were available to the children in the ladybird room and the preschool room were observed to be torn with pages and covers missing and could not support appropriate development of literacy skills.
3. The timber seat of a child's chair in the caterpillar room was broken and posed a safety hazard.
4. A small black seat in the bumble bee room was worn with the material covering torn which posed a safety hazard to the babies.
5. Shelving in the ladybird room and the caterpillar room was observed to be worn and did not have a smooth surface that was easily cleanable.
6. The adult sized couch and shelving in the caterpillar room was stained and in a poor state of repair.
7. There were a number of broken toys in the outside play area such as broken bikes, trikes and scooters which posed a potential safety hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Dolls and books have been replaced.

The timber seat in the caterpillar room has been replaced.

The black seat has been removed in the bumblebee room.

The identified shelving units have been sanded, varnished and a protective layer applied.

The adult seating in the caterpillar room has been replaced.

All outdoor equipment identified has been removed, replacement equipment has been ordered.

Room leaders have been reminded to ensure they utilise the maintenance request facility following weekly checks.

All the shelving units throughout the setting are being treated in the same manner as the identified unit.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to the changes made.

A toys and play equipment invoice was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 21.

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

General Safety:

1. Childrens lunch boxes containing perishable snacks supplied by parents were inappropriately stored on a shelf in the ladybird room. This posed a potential food safety risk to the children as all perishable snacks must be refrigerated.
2. In the butterfly room there was a pool of water observed on the floor adjacent to the sink. This area remained wet throughout the day and posed a slipping hazard to both the children and the staff.
3. In the butterfly room a number of children's coats, school bags and personal belongings were observed on the floor in a hallway leading to a fire exit. This posed a tripping hazard and could potentially impede egress from the room in the event of an emergency.
4. A second adult toilet where building works were ongoing was accessible to the children as the door was open. This posed a safety hazard to the children.
5. Cables were hanging loosely from a laptop on a shelf and posed a safety hazard to the children in the butterfly room.
6. A basketball net was unsteady in the outdoor play area and posed a safety hazard.

Infection Control:

7. A staff member was not seated at the childrens eye level while spoon feeding. The staff member was observed kneeling on the floor spoon while feeding three babies which posed a safety hazard to the staff and the child. The babies bowls of food were placed on the floor which posed a risk of cross contamination.
8. The nappy change policy was not displayed in the nappy changing area off the bumble bee room and the nappy change mat in this area was torn which posed a risk of cross infection.

9. Cloth towels which were not single use were used for cleaning which posed a risk of cross infection.
10. A large red waste disposal bin was overflowing with rubbish in the outside play area. It was accessible to the children and required emptying and posed a potential safety hazard.
11. There was limited space between the sleep beds in the ladybird room which posed a safety hazard for the children sleeping as staff could not move freely between the beds and it also posed a potential increased risk of cross infection.
12. Sweeping brushes and dust pans were stored in the playrooms which posed a potential increased risk of cross infection and a tripping hazard.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Parents have been reminded that only non-perishable snacks are to be provided.
2. Staff have been reminded that wet floors need to be dried as soon as possible. Non slip flooring will be installed.
3. Staff have been reminded to encourage children to hang up their personal belongings on the personal hooks provided.
4. The second adult toilet has been completed.
5. Staff have been reminded to ensure that all cables are kept out of children's reach.
6. The bottom of the basketball stand has been filled with sand.
7. Staff have been reminded of best feeding practices in relation to younger children.
8. The changing mat has been replaced and the changing policy has been displayed.
9. The service will use disposable cloths and are awaiting a proposal from a cleaning supplies company.
10. Waste disposal bins will be emptied regularly.
11. Staff have been reminded of the space requirements for children's sleeping beds.
12. Dedicated hooks have been installed in the playrooms to store the sweeping brushes and dustpans.

Room leaders will monitor and supervise new staff members during their induction periods.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to the changes made.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 23.

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 trained in first aid for children available all times in the service.
- (2) (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the hallway.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The floor covering in the ladybird room near the sink and the floor covering in the caterpillar room near the couch was stained and discoloured.
 2. In the caterpillar room there was an area of the floor at the entrance to the room which did not have floor covering and the cement floor was exposed.
 3. Skirting boards throughout the service were not painted making the unfinished surfaces difficult to clean.
 4. In the butterfly room there was a section of plasterboard exposed and the wall surface was unfinished where a door from the room had been removed.
 5. Ceiling tiles in the butterfly room, bumble bee room and the nappy change area off the bumble bee room were stained and showed signs of dampness.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1 & 2. A flooring company has been contacted to change the floors in the playrooms when the service closes in July 2024.
3. The skirtings boards will be replaced when the floors are changed.
4. Playrooms and hallways have been repainted which includes the previously unfinished section.
5. Ceiling tiles have been replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the flooring installation invoice was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 29(d).