

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LS059 |
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| Name of Service: | Aishling's Little Angels |
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| Address of Service: | Galesquarter, Cullahill, Co. Laois |
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| Eircode: | R32 Y499 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Aishling Aylward |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 12/03/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 49 | PM | 20 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly R35K1W4 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | D. Molloy |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Aishling’s Little Angels is located in Cullahill in rural Co. Laois and is operated from the ground floor of the registered provider’s two-story domestic dwelling. Access is restricted to the domestic dwelling.

The premises is positioned on its own enclosed site. A designated car parking facility is provided to the front of the premises. An enclosed secure outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the premises which is accessed directly from the service. The service consists of four play rooms, the butterfly room which is currently used by children aged 3 to 5 years availing of the ECCE scheme, the bumble bee room (toddler room) which is used by children aged 2 to 3 years availing of full day care, the bunny room (baby room) which is used by children aged 1 to 2 years availing of full day care service and the “new room” which is used by children aged 3 to 4 years availing of the ECCE scheme. A hallway and entrance lobby, a cosy den space located off the hallway, a kitchen, two nappy changing facilities, five toilets and wash hand basins for children’s use, a toilet for adult use, and two designated sleeping rooms are provided.

Staffing

The registered provider was part of the staff compliment and was present during the inspection. Twelve adults were working in the service on the day of inspection. All staff including the person assigned to cooking duties hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

The scope of the inspection was focused on the “big room” , the sanitary accommodation, and the outdoor play facility.

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 contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, who is 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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present during the inspection and facilitated the inspection and the roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

Twelve staff files including the registered provider were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.

(a) (b) Validated references from staff members' past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review. Validated references from reputable sources were available for review.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all twelve staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was available for staff as was required.

(3)

Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)(b)

Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before June 30, 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

One employee was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) at the time of inspection.

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)
The registered providers ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children throughout the opening hours of the service.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained and records showed that the adult child ratio was maintained in the service.

(8)
(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times, this was reflected in the staff rosters.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered providers had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person.

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

Basic Needs

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including self-feeding, self-toileting and caring for their belongings. Good care practices were observed, and infants nappies were changed as required in an interactive and hygienic manner.

Healthy eating was encouraged, and the service operated a healthy eating policy which was communicated with the parents. Food was healthy and nutritious and was prepared onsite on a daily basis by a designated cook. A hot meal consisting of a fresh fish which had been fileted to ensure no bones present, mashed potato, cauliflower, and carrots was served to the children. For tea children had toasted bagels with cheese and ham and a selection of sandwiches. Fresh fruit was freely available for children to help themselves on a low-level shelf.

Physical and Material Environment

The setting was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and was decorated throughout in a child friendly manner. Childrens art work was displayed and a restful sensory ambiance was noted in the little cubby /cosy area located at an angle beneath the stairs. The outdoor play area was large and well stocked with a variety of toys and equipment. The eco-friendly ethos of the service was reflected in the timber framed equipment, the boat, the play house, post office and shop .

A sheltered area for potting and planting and outdoor art work was provided which was similar to a large glasshouse and was partially enclosed. Gardening and potting and planting was carried on in this space and children had their own individual spring blooms potted and ready to bring home.

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:

The service was secured by means an electrical gate that was controlled from within, in addition to secure fencing around the perimeters of the preschool setting. The main entry door was operated on a controlled entry system which was operated from within and could prevent unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit from the service.

Access to the domestic dwelling areas was restricted and the lower part of the building was used for the sole purpose of carrying on an early years' service.

Refuse bins were stored away from play area and were inaccessible to children.

A pest control system was in place and was monitored and recorded to safeguard against pests.

Infection Control:

Children and staff were observed washing their hands and children were offered assistance to wash their hands if they needed help. There was an adequate supply of paper hand towel and liquid soap in the sanitary accommodation. Staff were observed wiping down and doing surface cleaning as required during the inspection.

Prompting and assistance was given with nose wiping as was required

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medication management policy had been devised and was available in the service.

Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication and correct storage of medicines.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Anti-febrile medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.

A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point to the front of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that no outings are conducted from the service.

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)
All staff had up to date first aid training and three staff had up to date First Aid training and First Aid Responder (FAR) certification which was open for review.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily available in the service at all times.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
- (b) an employee, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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)

A written record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on March 05, 2024.

(b)The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced in February 2024, and fire equipment was also checked in February 2024 .

(2) The record was available open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.

(3)

The person in charge stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service was available in the service. The insurance certificate was valid until 05 March 2025.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to information as was required for completion of the inspection.