

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS067		
Name of Service:	Laois International School		
Address of Service:	Towerhill, Church Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R32 V027		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ewa Cala		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	02/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM 6
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes and K. Murphy		
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

The Early Years' Service is registered to provide a sessional, part- time and full day care service for 22 children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00 on a Monday to Friday. A sessional service is in operation from 09:00 to 12:00. A school age childcare service is provided.

The Early Years' Service is located in an adapted two storey residential premises. Three pre-school rooms are in operation. The "Windy Dancers" room and an office are located on the first floor. The "Marching Ants" room and the "Busy Bees" room are located on the ground floor. There is a small dining area for children's use, an arts and crafts room and a kitchen on the ground floor. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is located in the town of Portlaoise, County Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider, manager and two adults were present and working with the children on the 2 October 2023.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation 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.

(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)

The registered provider and the person in charge were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

The files of five staff members were reviewed and the following was noted.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available from past employers or a reputable source in respect of all adults.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of all adults.

(d)

Police vetting was available for five staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of adults.

(4)

Adults working directly with children held a major award at Level 5 or 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were fourteen children attending the service supervised directly by four adults including the registered provider.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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)

It is acknowledged that the service engaged with a quality support service over a ten-hour timeframe.

Children were observed to enjoy various tabletop activities during the morning session. Children participated in a discussion about the numerous garden vegetables that a staff member had brought into the service. Children enjoyed the extended period of physical play in the outdoor play supervised by staff members.

Handwashing was carried out before snacks and after toileting.

Staff were positive towards children using eye contact, using children's individual names and praising them on the completion of activities.

The three pre-school rooms were bright and colourful. Tables, chairs and low-level shelving with materials accessible to children were noted. Play equipment included bricks, blocks, construction toys, arts and crafts, books and puzzles. A dress up and home area were noted in the Busy Little Bees and Marching Ants rooms. Children's artwork was displayed. A small art room was available for children's use with art supplies and aprons to protect children's clothes when painting. A daily routine was displayed in the pre-school rooms.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for tabletop activities, arts and crafts, a home area, sensory and physical play outdoors.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was attached to the rear of the service and consisted of artificial grass and all-weather absorbent surface areas. Toys and equipment included a large wooden climb slide, swing unit, an elevated playhouse, sand play area and a large wooden play car.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Suitable cosy rest areas were not available in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The rooms have been equipped with suitable and cosy furniture.

The service will ensure, when arranging the facilities, to select and provide the equipment in accordance with children's needs and their developmental stage.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs submitted.

Summary Comment

(1)(b)

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Parents provide all meals and snacks to the children in the service.

At 10:15 and at 13:05, it was observed that children enjoyed healthy food consisting of rice cakes, pasta, fruit, yoghurt, vegetables and sandwiches with water to drink. Children ate their food in the small dining area of the service assisted by staff. Snacks and meals were stored in the fridge. The temperature of the fridge was recorded on a daily basis.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. Parents were observed to ring the doorbell and wait for staff to hand over their child to them at collection time.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medicine was given at the time of the inspection. A temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. The medication was stored correctly in the office of the service.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were free from obstruction. A fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area.

Outing:

A risk assessment was available from a recent outing from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A cable from a laptop was accessible to children in the Marching Ants room which posed a potential risk of injury to a child.
This noncompliance was noted on the last inspection on 22 October 2022. The service stated in their Corrective and Preventive action response that "daily and regular checks will be carried in all the rooms for the potential risk hazards like unprotected electric cables, plugs, etc." There was no evidence of this action being carried out by the service on the day of the inspection.
2. A bean bag was noted in the Busy Little Bees room which was not suitable for children under 3 years of age due to the small particles inside the bag which posed a potential risk of injury to children. The age range of children attending the room was 2 to 2 ½ years of age.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing procedure observed was ineffective for infection control purposes as the staff member re dressed the child using the gloves worn for changing a soiled nappy which posed a potential risk of cross contamination.
4. A foot operated tightly sealed pedal bin was not in place in the nappy changing area for the hygienic disposal of nappies.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The cable from the laptop has been placed in the cord cover.
The Duty Manager will ensure and carry checks in all the rooms for the potential safety hazards before arrival of the children.
2. The bean bag has been removed from the room and replaced with the appropriate equipment.
The service will ensure when selecting the materials, are they safe for the purpose and a given age group of the children.

Infection Control:

3. The staff who performed the nappy changing procedure during the inspection was fully aware of their mistakes. To support staff daily and during the inspections, and to minimize the risks of the improperly performed procedure, staff as a team will create a poster with visuals and instructions of the nappy procedure step by step and display it at the nappy changing area.
4. The Service will ensure that all the provided equipment is in accordance with the infection control policy. Pedal bin for the nappy disposal has been provided for the nappy changing area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and written evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement. The practice stated will be assessed on the next TUSLA inspection.



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)
Three adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
A first aid box was located on the ground floor next to the kitchen and in the office on the first floor.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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.

(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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 22 September 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 13 September 2022 and 22 September 2023 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised in the pre-school rooms, in the outdoor play area and when using the stairs to access the sanitary accommodation. At 12:00 staff were observed to hand over each child from the outdoor play area to their parents.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2024.