

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015MH063 | | |
| Name of Service: | Giggles Childcare Centre | | |
| Address of Service: | Woodgrove, Ballivor, Co. Meath | | |
| Eircode: | C15 EH67 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Marie Daly | | |
| Service type: | Full Day, Part time & Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 22/07/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 48 | PM 40 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath. | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | D. Murray & AM. Cunningham | | |
| 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

Giggles Childcare Centre is an established childcare facility within the local community and is 1 of 10 community based childcare facilities operated by the Crann Support Group. The service provides a sessional, part-time and full day care service from 7am to 18:15pm for children from 0 to 6 years. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 9am to 12 mid-day. A school aged service is also provided. The service is located in a purpose-built facility and consists of the following rooms:

The **Caterpillar** room which facilitates the care of children from 6 months to 1 year.

The **Ladybird** room which cares for children from 1 to 2 years.

The **Butterfly** room provides care for children from 2 to 3 years.

The **Busy Bees** room cater for children from 2 years 11 months to 3 years 2 months.

The **Honey Bees** room consist of two interconnecting rooms which cater for children from 2 years 8 months to 5 years.

The **Den** which is the outdoor pre-school room provide care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 5 years, however during the summer term this area is available to the older children attending the full day care service.

School aged children are facilitated on the first floor of the building.

Staffing

Employed to work in the service was a manager, an assistant manager, 24 childcare staff, 5 school aged staff, 1 receptionist, 1 housekeeping staff, 2 cooks and 1 maintenance staff member. Present on the morning of the inspection was the manager, 1 assistant manager, 12 childcare staff, 1 staff member providing relief for breaks, receptionist, 2 cooks and 1 household staff member.

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 cooperation of the manager, 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure that identified specific roles of each employee was displayed in the reception area.

(2) (a)&(b) Thirty six staff files were reviewed.

Seventy two validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister 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) Present on the morning of the inspection were the manager, 1 assistant manager, 12 childcare staff along with 1 staff member providing relief for breaks working directly with the 48 children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

- The **Caterpillar room** there were 2 adults with 5 children ranging in age from 6 months to 1 year with 3 children attending on a full day care basis and 2 children attending on a part-time basis.
- The **Ladybird room** there were 3 adults with 10 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years with 8 children attending the full day care service and 2 attending on a part-time basis.
- The **Butterfly room** there were 2 adults with 8 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years all attending on a full day care basis.

- The **Busy Bees room** there was 2 adults with 6 children ranging in age from 2 years 11 months to 3 years 2 months attending on a full day care basis.
- The **Honey Bees** room had 4 adults with 19 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years with 15 children attending on a full day care basis and 4 children attending on a part-time basis.

The manager and 1 additional staff member were able to provide assistance and relief as needed.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced in the staff roster maintained in the service.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes were observed to be a social occasion with staff members observed chatting to the children when having their meals which created a relaxed atmosphere and promoted social interaction between the children and the adults. The children were given plenty of time to eat and were not rushed. The children's independence was encouraged and children who were able were allowed to feed themselves, with assistance provided by staff members when necessary.
- In the Caterpillar and Ladybird rooms any child who became upset was picked up and nurtured and cuddled until they settled. In the Caterpillar room sleep was child led with 2 children being placed to sleep before dinner. The remainder of children were placed to sleep at the service designated sleep time after dinner at 12md.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.

- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish. The theme of the week within the different care rooms ranged from “The Beach “ to “Jungle Animals” and “Messy play2 with children’s art work displayed to reflect this theme.
- All children in the service were observed enjoying energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members at scheduled times during the day.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff members communicated with parents and guardians on a daily basis, both informally during drop off and collection, and through updates in real time on mobile tablet devices regarding each individual child's snacks and meals, nappy changes, sleep times and activities. Parents could remotely access this information online throughout the day, in relation to their own particular child, and could message the staff members working in the care rooms during the day if required.
- The staff members in all care rooms were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their play activities. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones when engaging with the children and showed a keen interest in what each child was doing. The children sought out staff members for praise ,encouragement and reassurance. The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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, 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)(b) Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions and soft furnishings for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed. The cot room off the Caterpillar room had 5 cots and the cot room off the Ladybird

room also had 5 cots for the younger children requiring sleep. Stackable beds were available for the older children which were placed in the Ladybird and Busy Bees room.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space which was enclosed by railings with an artificial grass covering. There was a large outdoor space to the rear of the premises which accommodated the Den, the outdoor pre-school and the older children attending on a full day care basis.

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.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- The outdoor spaces were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment to facilitate the children to engage in energetic play and physical activity. The younger children had access to an artificial grass surfaced area with adequate room to run and play. The Den, the outdoor pre-school room had a large space to facilitate the older children’s learning and development in the outdoor environment. This space was equipped with a large area to run, a path to ride tricycles, planting areas for flowers, fruit and vegetables, 3 garden sheds to facilitate sand play, sensory play and for the storage of tricycles, mud kitchen with play utensils, dolls house, digging area, balancing planks, slide and swing and wooden benches.

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

The service had a 4 week menu plan for the younger children up to 2 years and a separate menu for the older children which included a variety of dishes ranging from meat and poultry all prepared onsite. On the day of inspection breakfast was served between 07:00 and 08:30am which includes a variety of cereals. A morning snack was served at 10am which was a selection of chopped up fruit. Dinner was served between 12 and 13:30pm which was mince stew with vegetables and mash potatoes. An afternoon snack was served between 15:30 and 16:00pm which consisted of rice cakes, chopped up apples and bananas. Additional snacks were available for the children staying until 18:15pm. The drinks of choice were milk and water.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured with a buzzer system and the outdoor spaces were enclosed. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the refrigeration of perishable items.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot rooms were maintained between 16 to 20⁰ C and between 18 to 22⁰ C in the Ladybird and Busy Bees room while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log was available to record the position, colour and breathing pattern on all sleeping children.
- Block out blinds were available in the cot rooms which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.
- Children sleeping on stackable beds were supervised at all times.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 03/06/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 08/12/2024. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in September 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 120 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2025 to the 27th March 2026.