

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015MH110 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Little Buddies Playgroup and Montessori |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | 18 Tudor Heights, Ashbourne, Co. Meath |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | A84 KV08 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Nicola Maguire |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 09/05/2023 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 19 | PM | 0 |
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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan,<br>Co Meath |
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| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b> | D. Murray |
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| <b>Title:</b> | Early Years Inspector |
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### 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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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not Applicable |
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### Description of service

Little Buddies Playgroup & Montessori is privately owned and provides a sessional service from 09:00am to 12:00pm and from 12:30 to 15:30 pm to children ranging in age from 2 to 6 years. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service is located in a residential area on the ground floor of a house and consists of the following 2 care rooms: The Free Play Room and the Montessori Room, sanitary facilities, kitchen, partially sheltered outdoor area and 2 grass outdoor areas at a higher level.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs 3 childcare staff who were all present on the day of inspection. A student was also on placement but left for an appointment at 11am.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,23,25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 co-operation of the registered provider, 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

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

Following discussion with the registered provider, the inspector was informed that 1 staff member had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 16/06/2021. A student was also present on college placement. These files were reviewed.

(2)(a) One validated written reference was from a past employer.

- (b) Three validated written reference were from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for the 1 staff member and the student.
  - (d) Not applicable as no new staff member had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.
- (4) One new staff member who worked directly with children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.
- (3) There were 4 adults working directly with the 19 children attending 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,

### 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:

- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying challenging outdoor play with their peers. The children in the Free Playroom availed of outdoor play and learning for the entire morning and returning to the service for snacks and to use the sanitary facilities. The children in the Montessori Room had a combination of indoor and outdoor activities.
- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 11am. Staff members were observed sitting and chatting with the children at lunch time, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The theme of the month in the Montessori Room was transitioning from pre-school to primary school and in the Free Playroom it was children "expressing themselves" through painting with art work displayed.

#### Supporting relationships around children:

- Positive engagement between the staff members and children were noted. Staff members were observed encouraging and collaborating with children in their indoor and outdoor play activities.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play.

- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs on the “Family Tree”. 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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were soft furnishings and cushions available in both rooms for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(2)(a) There were 3 outdoor spaces which were enclosed by fencing with a secure gate. The outdoor space off the care rooms was partially sheltered with an all-weather surface which permitted outdoor play in all types of weather. From the partially sheltered area there were steps up to a raised grass area which led into a larger grass area.

## 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 had well developed areas of interest with supporting equipment, art and crafts, Montessori equipment and a range of natural and sensorial materials to support children’s play and learning experience. Play materials and play equipment were visible and easily accessible to the children on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play. Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children. A suitable range of books were available in each care room and accessible to the children at their level.
- The outdoor play areas were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment for example: a wooden playhouse with a slide which was accessed through a mystery door leading to a wooded area, digging pit, tyres, mud kitchens, ride on toys, boats, loose timber blocks, climbing frame, fairy table and play cars.

### 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 gate from the outdoor play areas and the entrance door leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen door remained closed during the inspection.
- The service's designated emergency exits doors were unobstructed.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation and at the wash hand basins in the care rooms. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy and outdoor play.
- A fridge was available in the kitchen for the refrigeration of perishable items in the children's lunch boxes.
- Tables were sanitised and cleaned before lunch.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1.The last fire drill was conducted on the 07/03/2023 for the afternoon session only. No fire drill was conducted for the month of April 2023 for the morning and afternoon session.

##### Infection Control:

2.The water at the taps in the children's sanitary facilities was cold to touch and not adequate for effective hand washing.

3.Although it is acknowledged that the premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition, there was no documented cleaning schedules available in the service.

**Administration of Medication:**

4. There was no parental consent on the children's registration form for the administration of anti-pyretic medication in the event that the parents were uncontactable.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

**General Safety:**

1. Fire drills were carried out on the 11/05/23 for the morning and afternoon sessions. The registered provider will ensure that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis.

**Infection Control:**

2. The timer for the boiler is now set to come on in the morning to heat the water. The registered provider will ensure that warm water is available in the sanitary facilities to ensure effective hand washing.

3. The cleaning schedules have been updated. A staff member is now responsible to ensure they are available for completion on a daily basis.

**Administration of Medication:**

4. The registration forms have been updated to include consent for anti-pyretic medication. The registered provider will ensure that existing children and new children starting in September 2023 will have the consent forms completed for anti-pyretic medication.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

Fire Drills for May 2023.

Photographic evidence of the setting on the boiler to come on in the mornings.

**Infection Control:**

Cleaning Schedule.

**Administration of Medication:**

Anti-pyretic medication consent form.

**Summary Comment**

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for regulation 23. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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 the 07/03/2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was not maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The fire fighting equipment was serviced on 16/06/2023. The registered provider will ensure that the fire fighting equipment will be serviced on an annual basis.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation for the fire fighting equipment.

## Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 26 (1)(b) regarding servicing of the fire fighting equipment. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has not addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 26 (1)(b) regarding servicing of the smoke alarm. This non-compliance remains outstanding.

## 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 22 children at any one time attending the sessional service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.