

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH112				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Folks Academy Limited				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	54 Teaguestown Wood, Dublin Road, Trim, Co. Meath				
<b>Eircode:</b>	C15 NP04				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa O'Brien				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	09/08/2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>44</td> <td>PM</td> <td>44</td> </tr> </table>	AM	44	PM	44
AM	44	PM	44		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C Tunney & AM Cunningham				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Little Folks Academy Limited is an established childcare facility located within the local community in Trim, Co. Meath. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 1 year to 6 years and school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 08:00am-17:00pm Monday to Friday. The service is located in a purpose-built two-story building. There are five care rooms, Wobbler 1 & 2 Rooms, Toddler Room, Junior Pre-school, and Pre-school Room. A school aged service with a designated school aged care room was also available. Additional facilities include a kitchen, sanitary facilities (nappy changing areas) and two sleep rooms. An outdoor play area is located to the back of the pre-school with adequate parking available to the front of the pre-school.

### Staffing

The service employs 21 adults, including the registered provider and two staff members designated to care for school aged children. The registered provider had appointed two deputy staff members. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection, the Manager was the designated person in charge.

### 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 and safety.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection included the four pre-school rooms in operation on the day of inspection.

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 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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider had identified a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present on arrival of the inspectors.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place evidenced by the relevant records available and from speaking to staff members in relation to the service provision.

(2) Files in relation to the 21 staff members employed in the service were examined.

(a) Thirty-three written past employer reference were available and validated.

(b) In the absence of past employer references, 9 references from a source other than an employer were available.

(c) Garda Vetting was available in respect of 21 staff members.

(d) Police Vetting was available in respect of 4 staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Staff members held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualification Framework who provided direct care to children in the Pre-school Rooms, except as outlined below.

## Non-Compliance Information

(4)

- Evidence was not available to demonstrate that two staff members providing direct care to four pre-school children present in the school aged room, held a childcare qualification.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective Action

Children from our preschool room who were due to start primary school were on induction into our after-school room, their parents were aware and happy with this, however, the pre-school service have ceased inducting preschool children into our after-school room since the inspection.

### Preventive Action

Going forward preschool children will not be inducting into our after-school room unless a qualified member of staff is present.

## Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. The registered provider has given assurances that pre-school children will be cared for by staff with an appropriate childcare qualification.

### 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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on arrival of the inspector. There were four care rooms in operation.

(2) The adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the care rooms as follows:

- Wobbler 1 Room: Closed
- Wobbler 2 Room: One adult cared for 8 children aged between 1 to 2 years, availing of full day care.
- Toddler Room: Two adults provided care to 9 children aged between 2 years to 3 years, of which 9 children availed of full day care.
- Junior Pre-School: Two adults cared for 10 children aged between 2 years to 3.5 years, of which the 10 children availed of full day care.
- Pre-school Room 1: Three adults provided care to 13 children aged between 3 years to 6 years, of which the 13 children availed of full day care.
- Additionally, in the School-aged Room one adult provided care to 4 pre-school and 6 school aged, availing of a full day care service.

(8) At all times there are at least two staff members on the premises, confirmed by staff sign in and staff roster

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(15)(a) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in respect of each child containing particulars as specified in Regulation 15 (a) to (j).

(3) The children's records were available and open for inspection by an authorised person. Thirteen children's records were inspected and were completed correctly.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(16) Records were available as specified by Regulation 16 (a) to (k) in relation to the service. These records were available in folders such as a folder containing staff details, the service policies & procedures, fire maintenance records. Additionally, information relation to the service and staff details was displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of staff and parents/guardians.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were made available.

### 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs

On the day of inspection, the children's basic care needs were met. Children were supported to manage their personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Assistance was given as appropriate, such as supervision of hand washing. The parents provided their children's morning snack and tea. Dinner was sourced by the service from an outside company. The staff members supervised the children during mealtimes. The younger children had the opportunity to feed themselves.

The children were familiar and comfortable by routines carried out in the service. Staff were predictable and informed the children in advance of activities. The staff members used appropriate tones and used the child's individual names.

In the Wobbler and Toddler Rooms there was safe and comfortable spaces for the children to move freely and engage in play materials accessible to them. The children in the Junior and Pre-school Room 1 had opportunities for small and large group activities. There was a variety of developmentally appropriate materials suitable for the age of the children attending the service for the children to engage with.

All the children were facilitated with outdoor play in the soft surfaced outdoor play areas.

Children in the Wobbler Room and Toddler Room availed of a sleep time after their dinner, and children who did not wish to sleep were offered an alternative activity after a period of time.

##### Relationships around children

Positive engagement between the staff members and children were noted. The staff members were kind and used age-appropriate soft tones, the child's individual names, and engaged respectfully with the children. In the wobbler and toddler rooms the staff members were attentive to the children, comforted the children when upset. The staff members were familiar with each child's preferences and the children sought out staff members as required.

The older children were noted to interact comfortably with the staff members and sought out staff for attention and support as required. The staff members encouraged the children in their play choices and engaged in play with them as appropriate.

Transitions are clearly announced and signalled by staff which helped the younger children which allowed the children time to move from one activity to another.

### 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) Adequate facilities were available for the children to play indoors. The care rooms were bright, colourful, and the children were able to move unhindered by furniture or fixtures. The Pre-school rooms contained suitable and adequate facilities to facilitate the children's play.

(b) Adequate sleep and rest facilities were available for all children in the service. Children had access to a sleep room to facilitate undisturbed rest, in a quiet area away from general play spaces for the number and age range of children attending.

A sleep room was provided which was adjoined to Wobbler Room2 which contained 6 standard cots, in use for children under 2 years on the day of inspection which were observed to be in good condition with appropriately fitting safety mattresses.

Children aged 2 years and older slept on sleep mats in the Toddler Room. Additionally, suitable rest areas were also available in each room, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.

(3) (a) All weather surfaced outdoor areas were available, divided into separate spaces with age-appropriate play materials in all sections which facilitated the children's play.

### 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

There was adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment and materials available to support play experiences both indoors and outdoors in the service.

- Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children attending the specific care rooms. Highchairs were in good condition.
- Play materials and play equipment in the Wobbler/Toddler Rooms and the Pre-school Rooms were visible and easily accessible to the children on open shelving at their height. Play materials and equipment were laid out in interest areas including home areas, construction zones, arts and crafts areas and reading/relaxation areas.
- A suitable range of books were available in the care rooms.
- Children's artwork was displayed on the walls.
- The outdoor play areas were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment to facilitate the children to engage in energetic play and physical activity. The enclosed area was accessed directly from the care rooms on the ground floor level. Play material to engage children in outdoor play activities included a climbing frame with a slide, a large slide, wooden play kitchen, small and large sit on bikes / cars, sand trays, and playhouses.

### 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 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.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The outdoor play areas were secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Daily risk management checklists for the indoor and outdoor area were available.
- The kitchen was not accessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water (on ground floor level), liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play.
- The standard of cleaning throughout the service was good to prevent the risk of cross infection.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The inspectors reviewed medication records which demonstrated correct medication administration procedures were followed correctly.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Sleep observations were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting each child's position, colour and breathing pattern. Sleep records were recorded on a social media application and shared with the child's parents/guardians. The information recorded and shared with the parents/guardians included when the child went to bed, when the child went asleep and when the child woke up.
- Cots were in good state of repair. A system was in place to manage sheets and blankets, all sheets noted on cots/low beds were clean.
- Adequate space was noted between the cots in the sleep room and between the sleep mats positioned in the Toddler Room.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control

1. Foot operated bins were not in working order in the nappy changing room off Wobbler 2 and in the staff room which posed an infection control risk.
2. The water on the second floor was cold which did not facilitate good hand washing technique.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

##### Corrective Action

1. Foot pedals are in working order on all bins.
2. The hot water was not boosted on the day of the inspection.

##### Preventive action

1. Staff have been reminded to inform management if their bins break.
2. Staff have been reminded to boost the boiler on arrival each morning.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Appropriate action was taken to address the non-compliance stated above. Regulation 23 has been addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) A record was maintained which documented details of children's daily attendance in the service which was maintained in all care rooms. A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school.

(3)(a) The inspectors noted that authorised persons only were allowed to enter the pre-school.

(b) A visitor's book was available and maintained, the inspectors were requested to sign the visitors' book.

### 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

The registered provider ensured that a person who held First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Certificates were available to demonstrate that four staff members present had up to date training in First Aid Response.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions in the care rooms out of the reach of children

### 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly with the most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 28/07/2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were certified as having been serviced on 10/01/2023 and 14/06/2023.
- (2) Fire Records were open and available for inspection.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the hallway.

## 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

The registered provider ensured that pre-school children were supervised at all times, except as outlined below.

#### Non-Compliance Information

Children aged between 2 years to 3years 5 months of age attending Junior Pre-school Room who accessed the sanitary facilities were not adequately supervised at all times. The sanitary room was not adjoining the Junior Room but on the downstairs hallway of the service. The inspector was required to alert a staff member to a child who was calling out for assistance on more than one occasion. Staff members were either on lunch breaks or in the care rooms and unaware that a child needed assistance. This issue was noted on the last inspection on 15/11/22. The registered provided stated in the action plan to address that non-compliance that “a staff member will be floating at all times and available to supervise and assist the children in the sanitary area if required”. The inspectors noted a floating staff member was not available at all times to supervise and assist the children in the sanitary area.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective action

A floating staff will always carry a walkie-talkie and the staff will also have one in their room.

##### Preventive action

The staff in the room have been informed to let the floating staff know when a child goes to the toilet independently, so they can assist if needed.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider has given assurances that this recurring non-compliance has been addressed. This has been accepted by the Inspectorate and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

### 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 pre-school service is adequately insured for 110 children, expiry date on the insurance certificate was dated 27/03/2024