

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH116
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Name of Service:	Little Rascals Playschool
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Address of Service:	31 Pinebrook, Trim, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 VY13
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Name of Registered Provider:	Juliann Gibney
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Little Rascals Playschool is a privately operated Early Years' Service, located in a housing estate in Trim setting in Co. Meath. The childcare service provides a sessional service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years and operates from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs and from 12.30pm to 15.30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider and two staff members are employed in the service, also two additional staff were employed under the Access and Inclusion model.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,19,21,23,24,25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 cooperation 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
- (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.

(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 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 inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Five staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

(a) & (b) Ten validated written references were available for the staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members which were within the 3 year regulatory notice.

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

(4) Four staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model

Non-Compliance Information

(4) One staff member did not hold a childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The existing contract of employment is due to expire, and the contract will not be renewed once expired.

Preventive Action

Ensure all staff have the appropriate qualifications when being employed.

Summary Comment

This Regulation remains outstanding as one staff member does not hold a 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.*
- (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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct;
Two adults cared for 18 children attending a sessional service (aged between 3 years 3 months to 5 years).

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- On arrival, the children attending the preschool were engaged in play-based activities in the service. The registered provider and staff member present joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the staff were responsive to children's ideas and requests.
- The children brought their own morning snack with them to the service. There was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at snack time, with children chatting among themselves and staff contributing to the conversations.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed interacting with the children in a warm and caring manner. They chatted with the children using warm vocal tones, a welcoming facial expression, and a listening and reflective approach. The children sought out staff for comfort and support as they required it.
- The children's artwork and photographs were on display in the care room, which support children's wellbeing by feeling valued and appreciated. Children participated in art activities for Easter making paper egg baskets. Children also enjoyed decorating Easter bunny biscuits.
- The registered provider and staff member were observed taking the opportunity to interact with parents at collection time and update them on their children's day in the service.

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

- In the care room the play materials and equipment were displayed and accessible on low level shelving to promote the children’s choice and independence when selecting their play opportunities.
- The room was laid out with play resources and materials. Interest areas included a well-resourced kitchen area with a range of accessorial materials to enable the children to extend their play. Transport toys, tabletop resources arts and crafts materials and construction blocks. The children were observed to be well engaged and supported throughout the morning.
- A range of books were available in the service which supported the children’s language development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the side and back of the service. There is an area covered with grass and an area which has a hard surface. Equipment available includes, large plastic house, small slide, ride on toys, and mud kitchen.

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 which led directly into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access to the service.
- All cleaning agents and sharp implements were stored safely and out of reach of children.
- 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.

Infection Control:

- There was liquid soap and single use paper towels available in the sanitary accommodation for drying hands.
- The children in the service were encouraged by staff to wash their hands before eating, following toileting and after messy play.
- Tables were observed to be appropriately cleaned prior to and after eating.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Childrens lunches were not stored in the fridge to prevent the growth of food poisoning bacteria.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

Ensure all lunches are stored in the refrigerator at the beginning of each session.

Preventive Action

Ensure all staff are informed of the correct regulation and the change to store lunches in the refrigerator.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has given an assurance that actions have been taken to address this non-compliance. This assurance has been accepted and it will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

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

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The service did not have a person with up to date First Aid Responders course available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. No staff member had up to date FAR training, however it is acknowledged that two staff members had paediatric first aid certificates.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Staff have been enrolled in FAR course and will have up to date training in place by early May 2024.

Preventive Action

Ensure training records are checked biannually so they are kept up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted evidence of enrolment in a First Aid Responder course.

Summary Comment

This regulation remains outstanding as there is no staff member present with FAR training in the Early Years 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 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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 had a valid insurance certificate for 22 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2024.