

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH122		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Steps Preschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Greenpark, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A85 TN23		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Emily Dennehy		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM 0
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

Little Steps Pre-school provides a part-time/ sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and operates from 09:00am to 2:00pm weekdays. Children who are eligible can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service is located in a purpose-built facility on the grounds of the registered provider home. The service consists of 2 rooms with sanitary facilities.

The rooms were as follows:

Downstairs: The **Busy Bees** room catered for children attending the service on a sessional/part-time basis.

Upstairs: The **Lady Bugs** room facilitated the care of children attending the service on a sessional basis.

A large outdoor space was located between the service and the registered provider home.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs 2 staff members. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was present with 1 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,22,23,25,26 & 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 wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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 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) (a)&(b) Six validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 3 staff members.

(4) The 3 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(d) An application has been made for police vetting and will be forwarded to the Inspectorate when received. The registered provider will ensure that all staff members who require police vetting will have vetting on file before commencing employment.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Application for police vetting.

### Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has not addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 9 (2) (d) Management and recruitment as the police vetting remains outstanding.

## 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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) On the day of inspection, the correct adult/child ratio was maintained.

In the Busy Bees room there was 1 staff member providing care and education to 11 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years.

In the Ladybirds room there was 1 staff member providing care and education to 7 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present 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.*

### 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:

- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts, free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed particularly at storytime. The outdoor area had well developed areas of interest which provided the children with the opportunity to enjoy imaginary, creative and energetic play with their peers.
- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. The children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, putting on all-weather suits and boots, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.

- The themes of the month was “Winter” and “Hibernation” with the children painting hedgehogs and glueing on leaves which reflected these themes.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with sufficient time given to complete one activity before starting the next.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members 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 showed confidence around the staff members and sought out staff members for reassurance, comfort and support.
- 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 “in the Ladybird room.

## 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) Cosy areas consisting of cushions and a bench with a soft covering were available in the care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. There were no children in the service who required sleep.
- (3)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed by fencing with a secure gate. The surface area consisted of gravel, paving stones and soft tiles.

## 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. Both rooms embraced natural materials and areas of interest were richly enhanced with nature tables consisting of leaves, chestnuts, birds nest and pine cones. The play materials and equipment also incorporated 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 have choices regarding their play experiences.
- The outdoor space had well developed areas of interest which incorporated natural and creative materials e.g stones, wood, puddles, digging area, grass tunnel for climbing, mud kitchens, bug hotel, counting wooden rings, water/sand tray, tyres, wooden playhouse, wooden activity unit with climbing ladder and slide, play cars, planting area and a fairy garden. A sheltered area permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

## 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 children brought their own healthy lunch from home which they had at 11am. The children availing of the part-time service brought additional lunch. Snacks were available in the service if required. Children drinks were available on top of the fridge within reach.

## 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 door to the service was secured and the outdoor space was enclosed by wooden fencing with a secure gate. 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.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed.

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.
- Perishable items in children's lunch boxes were refrigerated.

### 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 26/10/2023.
- (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. The fighting equipment was last serviced in October 2021. The and mains powered smoke alarm were last serviced on the 12/10/2022.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) The fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarm have been serviced on the 27/11/2023. The registered provider will ensure that servicing will be conducted on an annual basis with all maintenance records available for inspection.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance records of fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarm.

### Summary Comment

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

## 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 service on a part-time basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.