

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH123		
Name of Service:	Little Steps Pre-School Ltd		
Address of Service:	Mullingar Road, Ballivor, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 F720		
Name of Registered Provider:	Florence Hamilton		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	20/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM 7
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		
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 Steps Pre-School Ltd provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The hours of operation are from 08:45am to 11:45 am and from 12md to 3pm weekdays. The service is situated in a separate building beside the registered providers home and consists of 1 care room with sanitary facilities. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises

Staffing

The registered provider employs 3 staff members. On the morning of the inspection the registered provider was present with 2 staff members.

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 inspector wish 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 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.
- (2) Four staff files were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 4 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) The registered provider and 2 childcare staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification

Non-Compliance Information

(4) One staff member did not have a full childcare qualification. This staff member is doing a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 which will be complete by April 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) This staff member will work under the supervision of a qualified staff at all times. The staff member will be qualified in March 2025 and proof of qualification will be forwarded to the Inspectorate when received.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has provided assurances that this staff member will work under the supervision of a qualified staff at all times. Proof of qualification will be forwarded to the Inspectorate when obtained.

This non-compliance 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.

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

(3) Present on the morning of the inspection were the registered provider and 2 childcare staff providing care and education to 16 children ranging in age from 3 to 4 years.

In the afternoon there was the registered provider and 2 staff members providing care and education to 7 children ranging in age from 3 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

Compliance Information

When the inspector arrived to the service the registered provider stated that the children were going on a trip to the library. The children put on their coats and hats and were very excited with lots of conversation and laughter observed. The staff and children left for the library at 09:50am.

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:

On leaving the service the children held onto a rope with a staff member at the top, middle and end of the rope to ensure no child became displaced and left the line.

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 fire drill was conducted on the 04/10/2024.

(b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fire fighting equipment was last serviced on 15/07/2024. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 07/10/2024.

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