

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN036
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Name of Service:	Little Rascals
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Address of Service:	Ballymacforban, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 FH63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Toal
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection: Day 1	16/09/2024
Day 2	17/09/2024

No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	27	PM	23
Day 2		25		-

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Little Rascals is located in a converted bungalow on the outskirts of Monaghan town. There is off road parking directly outside the building for drop off and collection. There is a large outdoor area to the back of the house. Additionally, the premises contains 2 sleep rooms, a kitchen and 2 sanitary areas one with a nappy changing area. The service has 3 care rooms in operation. A full day care service is provided and operates between the hours of 8am – 6.15pm. The service caters for a maximum of 35 preschool children aged 0 – 6 years. A service is also provided to school aged children in the afternoon.

Staffing

The registered provider and 7 childcare staff work directly with the pre-school children on a daily basis.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 20 and 23; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 15, 16 and 29. 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 inspectors wish 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,

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and a named deputy person to deputise as required.

Files for 8 staff members were reviewed:

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 6 members of staff.

Two staff had 2 written references.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 8 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 1 staff member who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult. This was appropriately translated.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 6 out of 8 members of staff, who work directly with the pre-school had a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) Four written references were not validated.

(4) One member of staff did not have documentary evidence of having a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification. A second staff member while it is acknowledged that they had documentary evidence of a childcare qualification there was no letter of equivalency available to state it met the minimum Level 5 childcare qualification. Both members of staff were observed working directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) Four validated references are now readily available and have been added to the staff file.

The registered provider will ensure that all staff validation forms are easily accessible in the staff files.

(4) The registered provider has confirmed that one staff member's role includes cooking and administration and does not work with the children.

The registered provider is still in the process of verifying the other staff members childcare qualification.

Staff will be asked to ensure that they provide the correct documentation as proof of their qualifications and to verify their qualifications with the DCEDIY before commencing employment in the creche.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of validated references.

Summary Comment

(9)(2) The registered providers response and supporting evidence was reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance in regulation (9)(2) was adequately addressed.

(9)(4) The registered provider was contacted by phone on 7/1/25 and an update provided on the second staff members qualification and confirmed it does not meet the minimum Level 5 requirement. The registered provider stated that this staff member does not work directly with the children.

This response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed.

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) On the day of inspection when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service there were three rooms in operation. During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the three care rooms:

Day 1:

Baby Room: There were 3 preschool children aged between 12 – 13 months present with 1 staff member.

Toddler Room: There were 5 preschool children aged between 1 to 2 years present with 1 staff member.

The Preschool Room: There were 19 preschool children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 4 years present with 2 staff members.

Day 2:

Baby Room: There were 3 preschool children aged between 12 – 13 months present with 1 staff member.

Toddler Room: There were 4 preschool children aged between 1 to 2 years present with 1 staff member.

The Preschool Room: There were 18 preschool children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 4 years present with 2 staff members.

On Day 1 there was 1 additional member of staff was present between 9 – 6pm working in the kitchen and assisting with sleep checks.

On Day 2 the registered provider was present and working in the kitchen and as floater.

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.*

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) - (i) On Day 1 of inspection in the Preschool Room it was observed that there was no documentation or registration form pertaining to 1 child attending this room. Staff when questioned only knew the child’s first name.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)-(i) The child’s document was in the setting on Day 2 of the inspection for the Inspector to review. Ensure all children have a registration form in the setting prior to starting. Staff are to be encouraged to be familiar with the completion of these forms and the personal information that they contain.

Summary Comment

A completed registration form was reviewed on Day 2 of inspection. The registered provider's response was accepted and the non-compliance addressed. This will be for review at the next inspection.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) On Day 1 of inspection when the inspectors reviewed the children's attendance records at approximately 10.30am there were no details of attendance recorded for any of the children in the Preschool Room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(h) Ensure that the staff complete the attendance record as the children enter and leave the setting. The registered provider will conduct spot checks on a regular basis to ensure the attendance records are being filled in correctly.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed. This will be for review at the next inspection.

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

There were 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely The Baby Room, The Toddler Room and The Preschool Room.

Basic Needs:

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before mealtimes and after messy play. Noses were regularly cleaned throughout the day.
- In the Preschool Room independence in toileting was promoted for those older children who were toilet trained and gentle reminders were given in relation to hand washing.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with lots of friendly interaction observed between children and staff in all rooms.
- Snacks and lunches were provided by the parents and consisted of pancakes, yoghurts, yoghurt drinks, sandwiches, cheese, dippers and fruit. For those attending on a full day care basis, a homemade hot meal was provided which consisted of homemade soup and potatoes on day 1. The option of plain pasta, beans and or a toasted bagel was also available for those children who would not eat the dinner. Dinner on day 2 consisted of carrots, cauliflower, broccoli and oxtail soup. Mashed potato, beans and sausages were also available.

Programme of Activities

- In the Preschool Room there was a pictorial "Class Timetable" available. There was evidence of the children's artwork on displayed painted leaves on the wall and a gluing activity decorating mirrors was observed.
- In the Toddler and Baby Rooms documentary evidence was available of medium and short curriculum planning. The information detailed planned activities for the children to engage in, details of the children's emerging interests and actions for further play.

- While not observed during the inspection, some of the completed art activities reflected the planned curriculum for example; one child showed an interest in cars and trucks. A ‘muddy truck’ painting activity had been completed in response to the emerging interest and another colour activity was then carried out.
- Evidence of the children’s additional art activities were on display in the service including “I love you berry much” footprints, handprints, ‘my own painting’ and photographs. The registered provider stated that these are compiled in a scrapbook throughout the year and given to parents at the end of the school year.

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) A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.

Two separate sleep rooms were located off the hallway - Room 1 and Room 2, each contained 3 standard cots.

While no child over 2 years were observed to sleep during the inspection adequate sleep facilities were available if required.

(3)(a) The outdoor area was located to the rear of the premises. It was enclosed, gated and had surfaces including a concrete area and a large grass area. There were a number of interest areas available which included a mud kitchen, a farm area and planting areas.

The grass area contained a large, covered sand pit, a wooden see-saw, raised flower beds and a willow tree tunnel plus a small plastic frame and slide.

It also contained musical wall water shoots, bug hotel, a grass covered tunnel and large wooden playhouse and an outdoor painting easel. A shed was also available for the storage of toys.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service. The following observations were made:

General Safety:

1. The floor mat in the cosy area of the Toddler Room was curling up at the corners and a trip hazard.
2. The glass patio doors in the Baby Room had stickers positioned at the top of the doors rather than at the child's level at the bottom of the glass so they are visible to the children thus preventing an impact hazard.

Infection Control:

3. In the Preschool Room the staff member observed changing a nappy, did not wear an apron and did not remove their gloves after nappy changing when washing the child's hands. This is an infection control risk.

Safe Sleep:

4. On day 1 of the inspection, physical safe sleep observations and a signature of the staff member carrying out the observations, were not documented on the sleep observation chart, when the inspector reviewed the record at 10.50am. A child had been put down to sleep at 10.30am and subsequently the staff member then 'backfilled' the information when the inspector reviewed the records again at 11.20am.
5. There was a fleece blanket hanging over the side of 1 cot which the registered provider stated was used to stop the children in cots from seeing each other. This is a safety and smothering hazard if pulled down by the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The mat in the toddler room has been stuck to the floor to ensure the corners do not curl and cause a trip hazard.
Check the corners of the mat when carrying out the risk assessment each morning.
2. Extra stickers have been added to the bottom half of the patio doors in the baby room.
Check the stickers stay in place on the patio doors.
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Infection Control:

3. Review nappy changing policy with all staff.
Aside from induction training the registered provider will continue to ensure the nappy changing policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Management will carry out regular spot checks on nappy changing.

Safe Sleep:

4. Review safe sleeping policy with all staff members.
Review safe sleep policy with staff on a regular basis.
5. Fleece blankets have been removed from the cot rooms. Cellular blankets only in use.
Only cellular blankets are available in the setting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was reviewed and in addition the registered provider confirmed via phone call on the 7/1/25 that additional training on infection control and safe sleep practices is planned for January 2025. The response has addressed the non-compliances identified in Regulation 23.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The light fittings located directly over the cots in both sleep rooms, in the hallway and in the sanitary area were not fitted with a protective covering.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) New light fittings have been installed in the baby room, hallway, cot rooms, sanitary area and preschool room. The new light fittings are fitted with a protective cover.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed.