

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

Tusla I.D: TU2015MO068

Name of Service The Little Acorns Children's Centre

Address of Service: Treanrevagh, Brickens, Claremorris, Co Mayo, F12 DX49

Email Address: littleacornsbrickens@hotmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Eugene Waldron

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change: Change in number of children that the service can accommodate from 58 to 68 children.

Proposed Number of Children: 68 children

Recommended Change Following Inspection: Change in number of children that the service can accommodate from 58 to 68 children.

Registered change: Change in Number of Children from 58 to 68 children

Date of Inspection: 0 8 0 7 2 0 2 4

Inspection undertaken by: Martina Farrell

Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: Early Year's Inspectorate,
TUSLA, Child and Family Agency,
2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ.,
Castlebar,
Co. Mayo.

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered for Full Day Care, Part Time & Sessional Service for 68 Children
Date of Registration	11 th September 2024

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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	The Little Acorns Children’s Centre is at non-profit, community-based service located in Brickens near Claremorris in County Mayo. The service is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional service to children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to open from 7:30 am to 6 pm however opens from 8:00am at present due to service demand.
Premises	The premises was purpose built for the provision of childcare services and there are four playrooms provided for preschool children in the main building. A separate sleep room is provided and there is a kitchen, staff room, office and sanitary facilities on the premises. The school aged children are accommodated in a stand-alone building beside the main building. Well-developed and resourced enclosed outdoor areas are provided for each playroom on the premises. The Senior ECCE playroom outdoor play area was not in use at the time of the inspection due to renovation works.
Staffing	There are 15 staff working in the service at present including childcare, relief, management and administrative staff. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)

(a) There is a named designated person in charge in the service.

(b) There is a named person to deputise for the designated person in charge in the service as needed.

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.

(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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)

The service proposes that adequate numbers of adults will be employed to care directly for the children and maintain the relevant adult to child ratios for both sessional and full day care/parttime services. The number of staff provided will be dependent on the number of children who commence in the service.

(8)

(a) There are at least two adults present when the service is in progress.

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 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—

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(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

Requirement met:

The inspection focused on the three playrooms that that the service proposes to increase the numbers of children attending in. These three playrooms are the Toddler, Junior ECCE and Senior ECCE playrooms.

The requirements have been met.

(1)

(a)

The Toddler, Junior ECCE and Senior ECCE playrooms cater for different age ranges of children. Younger children are accommodated in the Toddler playroom and the oldest are in the Senior ECCE playroom. The three playrooms have adequate amounts of toys and play equipment for the additional ten children to attend sessional or full day care services considering the proposed age ranges. The toys and play equipment are displayed in low-level, open accessible storage systems facilitating a child-led learning environment. The play equipment is arranged in similar defined interest areas in the rooms. These include for example construction and transport toys, role play including dress up items, home/kitchen areas and small world toys. Equipment for messy play is provided and each room has art and craft supplies suitable for the age range of the children. Adequate numbers of age-appropriate books are available in the playrooms. Tables and adequate numbers of age-appropriate chairs are provided for the children to facilitate tabletop activities, snack time and group work in the playrooms.

The three playrooms have separate outdoor areas directly accessible from their respective playrooms. The Senior ECCE playroom outdoor area is not in use temporarily due to renovations works in the mud kitchen play areas. The children from the Senior ECCE playroom are to use the large Junior ECCE outdoor area until the renovation works are completed. The outdoor areas have a wide variety of age-appropriate play equipment and toys. Ride on toys, climbing systems and balance toys are provided for physical activity and gross motor development. Messy play equipment including sand water/tables and

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	<p>mud kitchen areas are provided. Seating is available in all the outdoor spaces. There are sheltered areas allowing the spaces to be used in inclement weather. A storage shed is available to store smaller outdoor toys and play equipment.</p> <p>(b) The proposed additional children are to be aged over two years. Adequate supplies of stackable beds are available in the service for children aged over two years to rest on if they need to in the Toddler playroom. Individual linen is supplied by the service and laundered regularly. Each of the three playrooms has a rest area with soft seating for children to rest/relax that can accommodate the proposed additional children.</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>(a) The large outdoor areas in use are suitable, safe and secure and can accommodate the proposed additional ten children. Their perimeters are securely enclosed to prevent children from leaving unnoticed with securing mechanisms in place on gates. The spaces have a mixture of ground coverings including impact absorbent ground cover, grass and cement pathways. The toys and play equipment available are in satisfactory condition with no hazards observed.</p>
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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.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy midmorning snacks for the additional children are to be provided from home in line with the service’s healthy eating policy. The healthy eating policy is issued to parents when their child begins attending the service. A breakfast of cereal, porridge and toast and an evening meal for the children will be provided by the service. The main warm nutritious meal for the children is to be offered by the service sourced from outside caterers. • A copy of the service’s menu is displayed in the hallway for parent’s information and the menu is also sent electronically to parents by the staff.
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- Drinking water is to be always available to the children in the service.

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.

Requirement met:

The inspection focused on the three playrooms that that the service proposes to increase the numbers of children attending in. These three playrooms are the Toddler, Junior ECCE and Senior ECCE playrooms.

The requirements have been met.

General Safety

- The blind cords on windows and doors are secured using securing devices.
- Cleaning products are stored on high shelving in playrooms and in the service's sluice room out of reach of the children.
- Securing mechanisms are in place on low-level storage units containing items that may pose potential safety risks to children.
- The staff are aware of the requirement to observe sleeping children and keep records of colour, breathing patterns and position at ten-minute intervals.
- Storage for staff belongings is provided in the staff room area.

Infection control:

- Refrigerators are provided in the playrooms for the storage of perishable food items.
- Aprons and gloves are provided for use by the staff in the nappy change areas.
- Foot pedal operated bins are used for the disposal of waste and the outdoor waste storage bins are inaccessible to children in the service.
- Records of regular pest control servicing are available with the last service dated for the 18 June 2024.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) Certificates of completion of First Aid Responder (FAR) training are available for five staff members with respective expiry dates ranging from the 21 October 2024 to 15 May 2026.
- (2)
 - (a) Suitably equipped labelled first aid boxes are stored in the playrooms in easily identifiable locations out of potential reach of children.
 - (b) The first aid equipment is to be always available to children attending the 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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) (a) Copies of the templates for the recording of all monthly fire drills to take place on the premises are available in the service. The location of the fire assembly point is signposted at the front of the building.
- (b) Records are available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 13 November 2023 and the fire detection and alarm system was last maintained on the 10 May 2024.

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| | (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire are conspicuously displayed in the service. |
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

The service has a certificate of insurance for full day care services for a maximum of 82 children at any one time with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:

The requirements have been partially met.

The inspection focused on the three playrooms that that the service proposes to increase the numbers of children attending in. These three playrooms are the Toddler, Junior ECCE and Senior ECCE playrooms.

(a) No obvious defects were observed in the building structure.

(b) The main internal entrance door at the front of the service has a security mechanism with a keypad and buzzer system to prevent unauthorised entry to the area and children from leaving unnoticed. The door leading from the Toddler playroom to the kitchen is secured to restrict access to the kitchen from the playroom. The playroom doors leading to the outdoor play areas have securing mechanisms to allow staff control exit and entry to and from the playrooms.

(c) **Lighting:**

There is natural light is provided through windows and artificial lighting in the premises which is adequate and suitable for the provision of childcare services. The light fittings in the playrooms and in the sanitary areas have protective covers.

	<p>Heating:</p> <p>There is an underfloor heating system in the premises. The air temperatures of the playrooms and sanitary areas were recorded between the required 18 to 22°C.</p> <p>Ventilation:</p> <p>Openable windows and passive vents are provided in the playrooms to allow ventilation of the rooms. The sanitary areas are ventilated by audible mechanical ventilation systems and/or windows and passive vents.</p> <p>(d) The playrooms and the sanitary areas are clean and maintained in a satisfactory condition. Cleaning schedules are in place in the service with templates provided for staff to record cleaning processes in writing.</p> <p>(e) Adult sanitary accommodation:</p> <p>There are two sanitary units each with a toilet and wash hand basin provided for the adults meeting the requirements of one toilet and one wash hand basin for each eight staff in the service.</p> <p>Child sanitary accommodation:</p> <p>There are two toilets, three wash hand basins and a nappy changing unit provided for use by the proposed 22 children attending the Junior ECCE playroom.</p> <p>There are two toilets, and two wash hand basins allocated for use by the proposed 22 children in the Senior ECCE playroom.</p> <p>There are two toilets, and two wash hand basins allocated for children in the Toddler playroom sanitary area.</p>
<p>Requirement not met:</p>	<p>(d)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A section of the floor covering in the Junior ECCE sanitary area is not adequately secured and is coming away from the wall leaving a gap exposed. This poses difficulty for effectively cleaning of the area leading to a potential infection control risk. 2. The metal plugholes in two wash hand basins in the Junior ECCE and one wash hand basin in the Senior ECCE playroom have areas of corrosion posing difficulties for effective cleaning leading to potential infection control risks.

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	<p>3. Sections of one of the toilet cubicles in the Senior ECCE playroom require painting as there are patches of the paintwork with plaster exposed.</p> <p>(e)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Toddler playroom nappy change unit is located at the entrance to the sanitary area containing the toilets to be used by children attending the Toddler playroom. The location does not provide adequate privacy for the proposed increased number of 16 children in the playroom that are proposed to use this sanitary area. 2. Earthing wires and metal pipes under sinks are exposed and potentially accessible to children in the Junior and Senior ECCE playrooms.
<p>Response from Provider:</p>	<p>The service advised that:</p> <p>(d)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The floor covering has been secured in the Junior ECCE sanitary area. 2. The plugholes have all been replaced. 3. The painting of the Senior ECCE sanitary area is in progress and will be completed within a month. <p>(e)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The nappy change unit will be moved from the entrance to the sanitary area into the toileting area. The door into the toileting area will be moved to facilitate this. Evidence of the work was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the service on the 10 September 2024. 2. The metal pipes and earthing wires have been covered to prevent access by children.
<p>Summary Comment:</p>	<p>The requirements have now been met.</p>

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) *Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*
- (4) *Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*
 (a) *a sessional pre-school service, and*
 (b) *a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*

Requirement met:

The inspection focused on the three playrooms that that the service proposes to increase the numbers of children attending in and included the Toddler, Junior ECCE and Senior ECCE playrooms.

The requirement has been met.

(1) There is adequate clear floor space available to accommodate the proposed increased number of children in the three playrooms as follows:

- There is 40 square metres of space in the Toddler playroom for the proposed maximum of 16 children.
- There is 47 square metres of clear floor space in the Junior ECCE playroom for the proposed maximum of 22 children attending sessional services (and 20 attending full day care/parttime services).
- There is 57 square metres of clear floor space in the Senior ECCE playroom for the proposed maximum of 22 children.

(2) These regulations specify minimum space requirements of 2.35 square metres for children aged between two and three years and 2.3 square metres for children aged between three and six years.

The Toddler playroom clear floor space of 40 square metres can accommodate the proposed maximum number of 16 children aged from 2 to 3 years attending parttime/full day services. The Junior ECCE playroom clear floor space of 47 square

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metres can accommodate 20 children attending full day care and parttime services and 22 children attending sessional services.

The clear floor space in the Senior ECCE playroom of 57 square meters can accommodate the proposed 22 children attending full day care and parttime services.

(4) The minimum of 1.818 square metres is available for children in the three playrooms where sessional pre-school services and full day care service are to be contemporaneously provided.