

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO069
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Angels Playschool
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Bofeenaun Community Centre, Bofeenaun, Ballina, Co. Mayo
<b>Eircode:</b>	F26 D5W4
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hazel Cawley
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/04/2023
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM 9 PM -
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Angels Playschool is a sessional service located in a rural setting in Bofeenau in Co. Mayo and is registered to provide services to children aged between two and six years of age. The service provides morning sessions on Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 12:00hrs. The service is also registered to provide sessional services on Monday and Tuesday afternoons between 12:30-15:30hrs but is not at present offering these sessions.

The premises are situated in a designated section of a community building. The service has one playroom, sanitary facilities and a well-developed enclosed outdoor play area located behind the building.

### Staffing

There were three staff working in the service at the time of the inspection with one of the staff employed through a Community Employment Scheme. The registered provider is not involved in the day to day running of the service.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26 and 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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

(2) The designated person in charge informed the inspector that there were two new staff working in the service since the most recent inspection of the 19 March 2021.

The following vetting information was available for the staff new to the service:

- (a) Two written references from employers that had been validated in particular their most recent employers for both staff.
- (b) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for two staff.
- (c) International police vetting as not required as the staff members had not resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certification of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework was available for the two staff members new to the service.

## 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 morning of the unannounced inspection, there were 2 staff members caring for 9 children in the service. An additional adult on an employment scheme was also present throughout the inspection.

- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children of 1 adult for each 11 sessional children aged from 2 years and 6 months to six years was adhered to with 2 staff caring for the 9 children present. A sample of attendance records reviewed showed that the minimum ratios were met at those times.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The enrolment records of the 11 children currently enrolled in the service were reviewed by the inspector.

The records were found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was readily available for inspection by the inspector on request.

### 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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) There was one large playroom in the service with adequate and suitable indoor play facilities available for children aged from 2-6 years for the provision of sessional childcare services. The playroom was clean and organised in a way to accommodate children playing in groups or individually. Interest areas were organised and well-resourced with relevant toys for example a kitchen area, construction area, tabletop area, transport area, doll area, water and sand play areas and arts and craft area.

(b) There was a quiet space with soft seating in the playroom for the children to enjoy unstructured, quiet activities or have a rest during the session if they wished to.

(4) The children had access to a well-developed outdoor space directly accessible from the building. A shelter made from wood and strong plastic covered one section allowing the space to be used in inclement weather. The outdoor area was enclosed by a high wall and had a gate that was secured at all times allowing the staff to control access to the area. Suitable age-appropriate outdoor play equipment was

available to the children providing a variety of types of play opportunities such as wooden mud kitchen with utensils for messy play and climbing system with slide and rides on toys for physical activities.

### 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

Sufficient numbers of child-sized chairs and tables were available in the playroom and were observed to allow flexible arrangements for groups of children to play and eat together at lunchtime. Larger chairs were provided for adults to sit on.

A wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate equipment was available both indoors and outdoors to the children throughout the day to support fine motor, gross motor, cognitive and language development.

Play materials were organised and grouped in labelled interest areas with open storage units at the children's level to encourage children to use them independently, for example in the kitchen area, block area, transport area and doll area. A well-equipped farm area with a farm, artificial grass field, tractors and farms animals reflected the rural community that the service is located in.

Learning through messy play was facilitated with a water table, sand table and playdough accessories in the playroom and play equipment such as the large wooden mud kitchen and plastic/metal utensils in the outdoor area. Large amounts of art and craft supplies were provided indoors for the children to create artworks and flower shaped chalkboards were in place on the walls of the outdoor area for children to draw on.

Play equipment on the premises to promote physical activity and gross motor development outdoors varied from a large climbing system with slides to ride on toys and trikes, balls and rocker toys. Language development was supported with a range of age-appropriate books displayed in open shelving with the front covers facing outwards to gain children's attention.

Natural materials were incorporated in materials in the outdoor area such as the pebbles used for ground cover in one section of the outdoor space that were dug up and replaced by children with plastic spades during play.

Wooden logs were used to create small tables and log stools in the outdoor space.

The toys, equipment, materials and furniture in use were clean, in good condition and appropriately maintained.

### 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 doors were secured in the service during the inspection to prevent unauthorised people from entering the premises and children from leaving unnoticed.
- Blind cords were secured at the windows with appropriate securing devices.
- Cleaning products were stored in a secured cupboard in the playroom inaccessible to the children.
- Padding was in place on the supports for the outdoor shelter to reduce risk of injury.
- The toys and play equipment in use by the children were in good condition and appropriate for use by the age range of the children using them.

##### Infection Control:

- The staff cleaned down surfaces frequently during the inspection for example tables after use. Records of the cleaning/disinfection processes carried out by the staff in the services.
- Daily risk checklists were in place for various areas of the service and completed by the adults.
- Perishable food supplied from home for the children was stored in a refrigerator in the playroom under 5°C on the day.
- Handwashing facilities were provided with liquid soap, warm water and paper towels. Age-appropriate signage with pictures were displayed near the wash hand basins to prompt children to wash their hands properly. Hand sanitiser was provided in dispensers and used by the staff on the day.
- Foot pedal operated bins were provided in the service for disposal of waste.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The staff advised the inspector that none of the children attending the service at present require medication to be administered.

##### Fire Safety:

- The emergency exits were observed to be kept free from obstruction during the inspection.

##### Outing:

- On the inspector's arrival to the service, the children were playing in an enclosed community playing field area beside the service supervised by the staff. A risk assessment checklist was available in the service that the staff used to conduct a risk assessment prior to using the space to confirm it was safe for the children to use.

### 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) One of the staff members had undertaken a First Aid Response (FAR) training course with an expiry date of 29 September 2024

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in easily accessible location in the service.

(b) The first aid box was readily accessible and available to the staff if a child required first aid treatment.

### 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(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) Written records of the fire drills were kept by the staff. A fire drill was undertaken during the inspection and recorded correctly.

(b) The service kept records of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 29 November 2022 and the smoke/fire alarms maintained were last maintained on the 18 January 2023.

(2)

(c) The records were open to inspection by the inspector in the service on the day.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously near the entrance door to the playroom.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance in place until the 27 March 2024 for a maximum number of children registered in this sessional service.