

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO072
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Name of Service:	Little Treasures Creche
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Address of Service:	45 Meadow Park, Westport Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F23 N224
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Name of Registered Provider:	Beverly Flynn
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	46
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2 nd Floor, St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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 Treasures Creche is privately owned and operated and is situated in Castlebar, County Mayo with a sister service operated by the registered provider in the same town. The service is in a residential estate and is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional services to children aged from 0 and 6 years of age. The service opens from Monday to Friday between 8:00 to 18:00 and is registered to provide school age services.

Staffing

There are thirteen staff working in the service including the manager, staff that work directly with the children, relief staff and a chef. The registered provider is involved in the day to day running of the service and was present for a time during the inspection.

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 sections of the areas 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, 15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 and 30. 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 registered provider, 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

(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) There was a named designated person in charge in the service and there were two named staff members to deputise as required in her absence.
 - (b) A deputy designated person in charge was available on the premises on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service and the designated person in charge arrived later to the inspection.

(2)

Following review of documents and discussion with the registered provider and designated person in charge the inspector was satisfied that there were 6 new adults in the service since the most recent focused inspection of the 4 April 2022. The vetting information for the other seven adults had been reviewed on previous inspections. The following vetting and qualification documentation was available for the six new adults:

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular the most recent employers for one adult and one written validated reference from a past employer for three adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 adults. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) The required international police vetting was available for two adults.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for five adults new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting and qualification documentation was unavailable on file for the new adults:

- (2)
- (a) Two written validated past employer references were unavailable for two adults in the service and one written past employer reference was unavailable for one adult. One adult required a reference to be obtained from their most recent employer and there was no evidence of the validation of a reference from a past employer for another adult.
 - (d) The record of the employment/experience history available for two adults was incomplete and it was unable to be confirmed if international police vetting was required for these adults.
- (4) There was insufficient evidence available to show that qualifications for one adult met the requirements of the regulation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) All references have now been updated and validated by phone. Two references will always be validated by phone.
 - (d) The updated curriculum vitae were submitted to the Inspectorate. All employees will be asked to ensure they have no gaps in information on curriculum vitae.
- (4) The staff member's qualification has been verified and evidence has been forwarded to the Inspectorate. The required evidence is available on the staff member's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of vetting and qualification documents were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the service.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found under this regulation has been addressed satisfactorily by the actions taken and evidence submitted by 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.

(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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the inspector's arrival to the service with 9 staff working directly with the 43 preschool children present at that time. The manager was available at times during the inspection to provided additional support.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the day of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Wobbler room: One to two staff cared for 4 children aged between one and two years of age.
- Toddler room: One staff cared for one child aged one year and two children aged two years of age.
- Playgroup room: One staff cared for five children aged from two to three years of age.
- Preschool 1 room: 3 staff cared for 5 children aged two years of age and 17 children aged over 3 years of age in the morning and 5 children aged two years of age and 18 children aged over 3 years in the afternoon.
- Preschool/Afterschool room: Two staff cared for eleven children aged from three to four years of age.
- (8)(a) There were more than two adults present in the service during the unannounced inspection. The attendance records and discussion with staff found that at least two adults were always in the service when children were present.

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-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

10 children’s records were randomly selected from across the playrooms, for review by the inspector. The children’s records contained the information detailed under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required records were made readily available to the inspector by the staff on request.

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 service scheduled mealtimes in response to children’s needs. A breakfast of cereal and toast was provided by the service for children whose parents wished to avail of this on arrival to the service in the mornings. The service provided a warm main meal in the middle of the day and this was a main meal of beef chili with rice on the day. The ingredients of the beef chili were tailored to the age of the child with less spices included for younger children. The chef informed the inspector that vegetables such as onion and carrot were included in the chili base and side servings of broccoli were also served. The portions sizes observed to be provided to the children by the staff in the Wobbler room were suitable for their age ranges. The children brought food from home for their morning and afternoon snacks in line with the service’s healthy eating policy. There was a three-week rolling varied menu displayed on the parent’s information board in the hallway of the main building to inform parents. Drinks of water were always available in individual containers to the children in the playrooms throughout the inspection.

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 inspector was admitted to the service via the main building entrance door by staff following production of identification documents and requested to sign in the service’s visitor record book. The entrance door was secured when the inspector arrived at the service and was appropriately secured throughout the inspection. The outdoor area was securely enclosed, and the entrance gate had securing mechanisms in place allowing staff to control access to the areas. The kitchen area beside the Wobbler playroom was inaccessible to the children. The blind cord on the window in the sleep room was secured using a securing mechanism. The oil tank outdoors was

fenced off from the play area used by the Playgroup children on the day to prevent access by children. Cleaning products were stored on high shelves in playrooms out of reach of the children. The staircase was well lit and handrails were in place to assist children using the stairs.

Infection Control:

Hand washing facilities were available in the service with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels provided. The adults were observed to prompt children to wash their hands for example before eating and after toileting. Gloves and aprons were provided for nappy changing purposes. Foot pedal bins were supplied for the disposal of waste. The service had cleaning schedules in place and records were observed to be kept by the staff in the playrooms of the cleaning undertaken by staff. The play equipment was observed to be in good repair and clean during the inspection. Refrigerators were observed to be used by the staff members to store children's snacks provided from home for morning and afternoon snack time. Soothers were stored in individual storage containers.

Administration of Medication:

The staff were not observed to administer medication to children during the inspection. Medication was observed to be stored appropriately out of reach of children in the Preschool/Afterschool room. Individually labelled temperature reducing medicines for children were observed to be stored in a high cupboard in the Wobbler playroom.

Safe Sleep:

A separate sleep room was provided for the younger children to sleep in at the front of the main building. Standard wooden cots were provided for children under two years of age to sleep in with stackable beds provided for children aged over two years to rest on. At a scheduled sleep time following the main meal, the staff rearranged the position of the cots and stackable beds to ensure that there was at least 50cm between the cots and stackable beds. The linen provided was clean and laundered regularly. The air temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 20.3°C between the required levels of 18 to 22°C for children aged over one year.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes including the stairway from the first floor to the ground floor were observed to be unobstructed during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 13 staff members. However, two of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. Four cot mattresses were stained and three of them did not have waterproof coverings and posed potential infection control risks.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Renewal vetting has been obtained for one member of staff and application submitted for the second staff member. A new system has been implemented in the service to ensure vetting is renewed within 3 years.

Infection Control:

2. New mattresses and waterproof bedding were purchased. Mattresses have been added to the service's quarterly risk control checks and will be changed as needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the garda vetting renewals for the two staff were submitted with evidence of the purchase of mattresses .

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been found to have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

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) Certificates were available in the service showing that three staff members held the required First Aid Responder (FAR) training in first aid for children.
- (2)
 - (a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the Preschool 1 playroom and the service hallway.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were available at all times if the children attending the service required them.

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)
 - (b) The service kept a record of the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 10 October 2023.
- (4) Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on the walls in the service including at the top of the stairs on the main building.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The records showed that the recent fire drills had not been conducted monthly in the service with the most recent fire drill record showing that it was undertaken on the 20 May 2024.
 - (b) The service kept a record of the number, type and maintenance record of the smoke alarms however the records showed that the system was last maintained on the 17 January 2023 and not annually as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) A fire drill was carried out 18 July 2024 and 12 August 2024. Fire drills will be carried out monthly.
 - (b) The fire alarm system was serviced on 15 August 2024. Fire alarm systems will be serviced within 12 months. The fire alarm system company's automatic system has been updated to accommodate this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of fire drills, and information in relation to the servicing of the fire alarm system on the 15 August 2024 was submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found under this regulation has been satisfactorily addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed to be supervised by the adults at all times during the inspection. Supervision was mainly by sight however older children were out of view remaining within earshot of the adults if using the toilet independently. When the children were playing outdoors the staff positioned themselves so that a staff member could see the children in all areas of the outdoor spaces. The staff updated the attendance records when children arrived to and left the service. The staff were observed to supervise the children closely when eating helping them when needed. Two staff stayed in the sleep room with the children during the scheduled sleep time supervising them closely. Two staff were observed to supervise the children when using the staircase.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a certificate of insurance for up to 50 children attending full day care services at any one time with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

- (e) On the day of the inspection at times a maximum of 23 children were cared for in the Preschool 1 playroom. The 23 children had access to a sanitary unit with one cubicle containing a toilet and wash hand basin, and a second cubicle with a toilet, nappy changing unit and one wash hand basin. The sanitary provision allocated to the 23 children did not meet the regulatory requirements. The requirements are that there is one toilet and one wash-hand basin for every 11 toilet-trained early years children and that there is one nappy-changing unit, including a wash-hand basin and changing mat, for every 11 children in nappies.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (e) Going forward the service will ensure to only care for 22 children in Preschool 1 playroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

None submitted.

Summary Comment

The action taken has addressed the non-compliance found under this regulation and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) and (2)

On the day of the inspection at times there were 23 children attending parttime/full day care services being cared for in the Preschool 1 playroom. 5 of these children were aged 2 years and required 2.35 square metres of clear floor space and 18 of the children were aged over 3 years of age and each required 2.3 square metres of clear floor space. A total of 53.15 square metres of clear floor space was required for the children in attendance however there was only 51.37 square metres of clear floor space in this playroom.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

(1) and (2)

Corrective and Preventive Action

Going forward the service will ensure to only care for 22 children in Preschool 1 playroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

None

Summary Comment

The action taken has addressed the non-compliance and will be reviewed on next inspection.