

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY013
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Name of Service:	Little Stars Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Rath / Eglish Community Centre, Rath, Birr, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R42 X471
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edel Corboy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy
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

The service is registered as a sessional service catering for up to 22 children. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service currently operates a morning session between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00. The afternoon session between the hours of 12:15 and 15:15 did not operate during the current school year. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in a room within a community centre. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear and side of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is rural in its location in the village of Rath, County Offaly.

Staffing

On 17 June 2025 the registered provider who works directly with children and three adults were present. One adult was rostered off.

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.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (3)

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child – (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)

Regulation 16 Record of a pre-school service – (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j)(k)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play -- (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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, 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)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were present and available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present throughout the inspection.

Five staff files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from either a past employer or a source other than a previous employer in respect of the files reviewed. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

- (c)
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the five files reviewed. In respect of three of the five files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with 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)
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
Staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.
- (3)
There were twenty children attending the service supervised directly by four adults.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

In a sample review of seven child records the details relating to (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) were in place.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

It was observed during the inspection that each child was allocated to a key person grouping. During the mid-morning snack, the assigned key person sat with the children encouraging interactions. Children were encouraged to be independent in opening their lunch boxes and were assisted by staff when necessary. The children were given time to sit and eat their snack while having conversations with their peers.

Children went to the toilet independently and were assisted where necessary. Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting.

Materials were accessible to children on low level wooden shelving and included books, jigsaws, bricks, blocks, dolls, prams, arts and crafts and fine motor skill toys. Children made choices as to what they played with and what activity to participate in. Children enjoyed free play outdoors, tabletop activities and graduation practice with action songs during the inspection.

Children's artwork was displayed including themed craft relating to their forthcoming graduation ceremony.

Children availed of rest opportunities in the designated rest area in the pre-school room.

Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Positive interactions were observed with staff and children. Eye contact was maintained with soft language tones used and positive praise given to children on the completion of activities. Staff sat with children during tabletop activities. Staff were familiar with children and their personalities.

The service worked in partnership with parents and a verbal handover was observed at collection time. The service communicated with parents via a short message system (SMS) and uploaded pictures and narratives depicted the activities and events enjoyed by the children for parents to view.

A learning journal is maintained on each child that includes the children's play and work activities completed during the 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-

(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)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, sensory, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Soft furnishings in the pre-school room supported rest and relaxation for the children in attendance.

(4)

The outdoor play area consisting of an artificial grass surface area, a concrete surface area and a mulch area was located to the rear and side of the premises. The outdoor area was equipped with a covered sand tray, a playhouse, an outdoor play kitchen, a water wall and a wall mounted chalk board. Secure storage was available for bikes, trikes balls and outdoor games.

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

Healthy snacks for the children were provided by the parents. The mid-morning snack consisted of a variety of wraps, crackers and brown bread sandwiches. A broad selection of dairy, fruit and vegetables were noted. The children drank water from their individual water bottles. A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

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 to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. Children were observed to wash their hands before after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. A record book was available to record any medicine administered should it be required.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school room. A fire assembly point was identified to the side of the premises.

Outing:

A risk assessment form and checklist were available for review in respect of a recent outing from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of two staff members was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider stated in the response that garda vetting applications had been applied to the relevant organisation and that a checklist of renewal dates had been developed to account for all vetting documents relating to the adults in the service to ensure that renewal of garda vetting was applied for in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted the renewed garda vetting disclosures in line with the corrective action.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)

Two staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the pre-school service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school 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 firefighting 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 11 May 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in August 2024. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in June 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.