

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN034		
Name of Service:	Little People's Place		
Address of Service:	Clonark, Cornafulla, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.		
Eircode:	N37 XN40		
Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Glynn		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM 11


Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Heagney
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

	<p>Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</p> <p>QMS Ref: EYI-RRT12.1 V2.0 03/03/2023 Service ID: TU2015RN034</p>	1 of 16
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This full day care service is in a rural townland of Cornafulla, near of the town of Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The service operates a full day care service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. The service caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 35 pre-school children, at any one time.

There are two playrooms, the Pre-school room 1 and the Pre-school room 2. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a dining room where children have their main meal. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and sides of the premises. There are three all-weather sheltered areas and a cabin 'outdoor classroom'. There is a separate bespoke unit and a designated outdoor play area for the school aged children attending the service's breakfast club, afterschool programme, and summer camp.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily. Eight staff including the registered provider work in the service. Seven staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 7, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a staff member who solely works directly with the school aged children.

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, and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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, and*

(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 designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was the person in charge and on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

The eight staff files were reviewed.

(2)

(a)&(b)

Sixteen of the sixteen validated written references on file in respect of the eight staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eight staff.

(d)

Documentary evidence indicated that none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and therefore did not require police vetting.

(4)

Seven staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 7 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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)

At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2)

Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 18 children present. All children were aged between 2 years and 6 months to 4 years and 6 months. There were four staff directly caring for these children.

In the afternoon, there were 11 children present. All children were aged between 2 years and 6 months to 4 years and 6 months. There were three staff, directly caring for and supervising these children.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

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;

(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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)&(i)

Thirteen children's records were reviewed by the early year's inspector.

The sample thirteen records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The thirteen children's records contained the following:-

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.

- The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4)&(5)

The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack(s) and meal(s) without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack and mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children’s ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to toileting and toilet training. Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
- being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language;
- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
- using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.

- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times, and notice boards with upcoming events / schedules. The service used an interactive social media application showing children’s activities, events, themes, and learning. The app also had photographs of the children engaged in activities, the student of the week, the service calendar, and various policies procedures. The staff collated individual profile scrapbook which showed photographic activities and the themes that a child engaged in.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day while in the service.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child’s abilities, allowing for children’s partial participation and participation with support.
- On the day of inspection, the children (from the Pre-school 1 and 2 rooms) were observed at free play, circle time, at water play, connecting, at sensory play, dressing up and wearing costumes, at pretend kitchen / house, stacking materials, and at construction. The children participated in various action songs such as ‘head, shoulders, knees, and toes’ and ‘Miss Polly had a dolly’. The children were observed participating in action songs, jumping, hopping, balancing, pretend sleeping and hiding. On the day of

inspection, in the outdoor areas, the children were observed at water play, making tea, at role play, playing with transport vehicles, digging, running, sorting, and exploring.

- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. For example, all children in Pre-school 2, had the opportunity to put on a nappy on the baby doll. In both playrooms, the children had the choice and option of playing inside or outside.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For examples: using personal greetings 'say hello and shake hands to the child next to you', giving appropriate encouragement 'you can solve it', and accepting children's best efforts. Staff assisted the children to develop techniques that help them manage their positive and negative feelings: OWL (observe, wait, listen). The inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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-

(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)(a)

In Pre-school 1 and Preschool 2, the space was designed and arranged to:

maintain a space that is clean, organised and free of clutter;

accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group;

divide into areas that are supplied with materials organised in a way to support children's play and learning;

give children with additional needs access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities as the other children, to promote their welfare and development.

- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child's wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.
- The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school.
- The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. Staff encouraged the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child's needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.
- The children had access to enough varied materials and equipment, which were rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests and skill levels.

- Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
- There were play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore were freely available in the service. For examples: open-ended objects such as play dough, construction and building materials such as stacking shapes, magnets, links, connectors, threading material, suckers, blocks. There were problem solving items such as insets, puzzles, counters, timers, weighting scales, and jigsaws. There were role play areas such as kitchens, shops, houses, and construction tables with tools. There were creative play areas with a selection of art and craft materials. There were animals, dinosaurs, transport vehicles, musical instruments, dolls, action figures, puppets and dress up clothing.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters, educational materials, and children’s artwork. Displays included emotions, handprints, ribbons, shapes, colours, the curriculum, flags, and my body. There were also mounted white and blackboards.

(1)(b)

- There were cosy areas with soft shapes, cushions, and mats under canopies in both playrooms. The service had stackable beds and linen for any child attending on a part time or full day care basis sleep provision.

(3)(a)

Outdoor area

- The service balanced the need for safety with the need to provide physical, challenging experiences for children. The outdoor area was secured by fencing.
- The equipment and materials available in the outdoor play area provided children with play, movement and exploration opportunities that are exclusive to the outdoors.
- The outdoor areas were an extension of the indoor areas (Pre-school 1 and Preschool 2) and were linked with the learning that goes on inside. On the day of inspection, the children had opportunities to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions. There were three all-weather sheltered areas covered with clear perspex. There was also a cabin / outdoor classroom.
- Materials and items included tractors, bicycles, trucks, wheelbarrows, boats, diggers, push cars, scooters, water basins, wellington and coat sheltered area. There were water basins, sand basins and mud kitchens, with various utensils. There were tyres, swings, goal posts, a climbing frame, a bridge with tunnels, houses, and driving seating and bench seating. There was a teepee, slides, rockers, and picnic tables.

- In the outdoor classroom materials and equipment included tracks, transport vehicles, a desktop, a kitchen with food items and utensils, construction items, bunching bags, writing desks, and various seating. There were plants, chimes, and decorations.
- There was a designated store cabin with further items, toys, materials, and equipment. There were prams, buggies, musical instruments, bouncing balls, dolls, foam shapes, a blow-up rainbow, a dart board, and framed trampolines.

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 had a healthy eating policy.
- From 8.30hrs to 9.00hrs, the service provided breakfast for any child who was hungry.
- At 11.00hrs and 15.15hrs, the children had their snack of fruit pieces, yogurt, crackers, sandwiches, and bread sticks, provided by parents and guardians.
- The children attending the service on a part time basis had two meals /snacks, supplied by the parents and guardians.
- The children attending the full day care service had a hot meal provided by the service. On the day of inspection, at 12.40hrs, the main meal was spaghetti bolognaise.
- The registered provider advised that the staff ensured that each meal / snack had two food groups.
- The registered provider advised that there was a supply of food in the kitchen, for any child requiring additional food.
- A drinks table was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to 'self-serve' their drinks.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in one of the two designated fridges.

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:

- There was a buzzer access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The staff only areas, kitchen, staff sanitary area and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external play areas were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows were fitted with safety devices to restrict openings. There were visibility posters on the glass doors as a safety precaution.
- There were records of a regular pest control system.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The registered provider clearly identified to the early year’s inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of risk to the pre-school child.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchen and Pre-school room 1, for the storage of perishable foods.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The registered provider had a cleaning schedule template and cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

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)

Four staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of a current paediatric first aid qualification.

(2)(a)

Two suitably equipped first aid bags were available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.

(b)

The first aid bags were readily available, with content items within date.

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)(a)

Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 1st of September 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment and smoke and fire detection system was dated 17th of October 2022.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each 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 insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, which was for a full day care service for 35 children and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.