

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO027
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Life Start Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Pearse Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F91 K5TF
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Catherine Mcgowan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	55	PM	52
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello and M Farrell
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

This full day care service is located in an urban setting. A service is provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8am to 5pm. A school age service is also provided. The premises is located in a detached two-storey building with six playrooms, a kitchen and office space on the ground floor. The service has shared use of the first floor of the building, where their staff room is located, with offices for a community-based support programme. The service has exclusive use of a well-developed outdoor area.

### Staffing

On the day of inspection 30 adults were employed in the service. 27 Adults worked directly with the children this included the person in charge and deputy person in charge. There were two receptionists employed and one cook in the service. The service also facilitates student placements, and three students were on placement on the day of 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 the area 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, 10, 11, 16, 23, 25, 27 and 31. 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 inspectors wish 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

*(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) (b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2)

The records of twelve adults employed in the service since last inspection and three students confirmed with the person in charge were reviewed.

(a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of nine adults employed in the service.

(b) Reference from a source other than a past employer was available for one adult.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure dated within the last three years was available for all 33 adults in the service.

(d) International police vetting was available for two adults in the service that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Ten of the adults new to the service since the last inspection had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) and (b)

Four adults working in the service who had previous employment required a reference from a past employer.

(4)

There was no written evidence available from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to determine if the qualification on file for one staff member met the regulation requirement.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff files have been updated with necessary information. Recruitment procedure updated to include section about references from most recent employer as per regulation

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documentary evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate and the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to regulation 9 have been resolved. This regulation is now compliant.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Non-Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed by the inspectors and found not to contain the necessary information to meet the regulatory requirements.

- (r) The service risk management policy did not set out how long risk management records will be kept.
- (j) In the services policy on accidents and incidents, no information was provided on the measures taken to prevent accidents and incidents.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The risk management policy and the service policy on accidents and incidents have been reviewed and updated. Policies will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if required.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate and the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to regulation 10 have been resolved. This regulation is now compliant.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were 15 adults working directly with 55 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and 15 adults working directly with 52 children in the afternoon. The person in charge and deputy person in charge also provided direct care to children on the day.
- (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:

Bluebell Room: 3 staff cared for 13 children aged three years to five years of age in the morning and 11 children in the afternoon.

Primrose Room: Two staff cared for eight children aged two to three years of age.

Lily room: Three staff cared for ten children aged three to five years of age.

Poppy Room: Two staff cared for six children aged one to two years of age.

Daisy Room: One staff member cared for five children aged two to three years of age.

Sunflower preschool room: Three staff members cared for 13 children aged three to five years of age in the morning and three staff members cared for 12 children aged three to five in the afternoon.

There were also three adult students present in the service during the inspection.

## 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:*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(k) The registered provider evidenced details of all accidents and incidents involving a preschool child attending the service. All records had evidence that parents or guardians had been informed of any accident/ incident involving their preschool child.

### 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:

On the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service the main entrance door was found to be secured. The inspectors were admitted to the service by staff following production of identification documents. There was a keypad system in place allowing the service to control entry. Internal door handles were positioned at a high level to prevent children from leaving playrooms unnoticed. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Daily risk checklists were completed in the playrooms by the staff. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children on high shelves or in cupboards with safety securing mechanism in place.

##### Infection Control:

Cleaning records were kept by the staff members. Boxes of tissues were available in playrooms at low levels for children to use if they needed to. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste. Separate storage containers were provided for children's personal items in the nappy change areas.

##### Administration of Medication:

Two staff members were observed to work together to administer medication to a child during the inspection with written records signed by the staff members kept on file. The staff told the inspectors that the medication was stored in a refrigerator in the office area in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

##### Safe Sleep:

Four standard cots were available in a designated sleep room to meet the needs of the preschool children under two years of age. Measures were taken by staff to ensure that the sleep room temperature was maintained between 16°C and 20°C.

Stackable beds were set up in the Primrose playroom for children aged over two years to rest/sleep on as needed. The staff recorded written observations of the children when resting/sleeping at ten-minute intervals recording information on their position, colour and breathing with the temperature of the playroom recorded.

##### Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were found to be unobstructed during the inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. A blind cord in the sanitary unit used by the children attending the Lily room required securing. Two blind cords behind items stored on windows in the Lily playroom also required securing. The blind cord on the exit door in the Daisy room required securing.
2. Wooden doors were missing from the home corner play units in the Lily playroom with metal securing mechanisms protruding from the unit posing potential safety risks to children.
3. A radiator cover in the Daisy room had become loose and required being secured to the wall.
4. In the small outdoor area, the sand box area was secure by metal boxes. While metal boxes had safety covers on the corners, two of the safety covers had become dislodged and resulted in a risk of injury to the preschool child.
5. In the mud garden, the mud kitchen appeared cracked and broken resulting in exposed nails and splinters.
6. The wire mesh window in the mud garden required securing as the exposed wire had a potential to cause injury.

### Infection Control:

7. Toys and play equipment including wooden train tracks, plastic automobiles and a paint brush had been placed for cleaning in the only sink in the bluebell and primrose room nappy change unit and remained there during several nappy changes posing an infection control risk. The sink was inaccessible for use by the staff to wash their hands. The sink area in the poppy nappy changing room was also being used as a storage area resulting in access to liquid soap and running water difficult.
8. A staff member was observed to change several children's nappies without washing the children's hands or washing their own hands following taking off their gloves after the nappy changes.
9. Two of the staff were observed to change children's nappies or soiled clothing without wearing aprons to protect their clothing.
10. Some of the children in the Bluebell playroom at morning snack were observed to eat food that had been provided by the service directly off the table without plates provided to them.
11. The vent of the ventilation system in the sanitary unit used by the Bluebell and Primrose playrooms was very dusty and required cleaning.
12. Soothers in the poppy room were stored out of their containers in the fridge resulting in an infection control concern.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

### General Safety:

1. We removed the blind in the Lily Room toilet as it is not used blind 2 in Lily Room also removed as it is not in use., blind 3 in Lily room secured and Daisy room blind cord secured. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Wooden doors removed completely, and photographic evidence submitted.
3. Radiator cover secured to the wall, photographic evidence submitted.
4. Covers replaced on corners of the sand box metal box. Photographic evidence submitted.
5. Mud Kitchen removed.
6. Wire mesh secured.

### Infection Control:

7. Toys have been removed and a sign put up.
8. Policy on nappy changing was updated and issued to all staff. These policies are updated and displayed in all changing areas.
10. Plates are provided for snack.
11. Vent cleaned.
12. Soothers are stored in individual containers in the fridge.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted.

#### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions outlined in the corrective and preventative form submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to Regulation 23 have been rectified. This regulation is now compliant.

## 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) On the day of inspection five staff members were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.
- (2)
- (a) and (b)
- Small first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms. A fully equipped first aid box was located in the hallway adjacent to the care rooms and was available to children at all times.

## 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 required adult:child ratios were in place on the day of the inspection with 15 staff provided to care for and supervise the 55 children present.

During the inspection staff in all rooms were observed to supervise the children mainly by sight. There was evidence of good communication between staff members. If a staff had to leave an area such as nappy changes or sleep room checks, they informed the staff member they were working with ensuring adequate supervision was in place at all times.

During outdoor play, the staff positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor area to be able to keep the children in view at all times to ensure safety and supervision.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

*(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*

## Compliance Information

(d) The service submitted a notification in writing to the Early Years Inspectorate within the required timeframe in relation to incidents in the service.