

# TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

## Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015SO032

Name of Service: Little Darlings Creche/Playschool

Address of Service: 31 Ashbury Lawn, Ballinode, Sligo

Email Address: ocarroj@hotmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Christine O'Carroll

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change: Increasing number of children cared for from 17 to 23. Extension to ground floor playroom. Provision of a nappy changing room and additional room with a toilet and wash hand basin for use by children.

Proposed Number of Children: 23

Recommended Change Following Inspection: A maximum of 23 children in daily attendance in the service. A maximum of 16 children to remain in the service for part-time or full daycare.

Registered change: Change in number of children that can be accommodated from 17 to 23 (Max 16 PT/FDC)

Date of Inspection: 2 0 0 6 2 0 2 3

Inspection undertaken by: Ann Spain. Lorraine Costello.

Title: Registration Support Manager. Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: Markievicz House, Barrack Street Sligo, F91XC84

**Rationale for Inspection:**  
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day / Part Time / Sessional Service for 23 Children (Max 16 PT/FDC)
Date of Registration	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

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### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Little Darlings Creche/Montessori is a privately run service which is owner occupied. The service is open since 2002 and is located in a residential housing estate in Sligo town. The service is operational between the hours of 7.45am and 6.15pm for 50 weeks annually. While the service is registered to accommodate children 0 to 6 years it is currently accommodating children aged 18 months to 6 years. A school age service is provided between the hours of 2.30pm and 5.30pm.
Premises	The two storey semidetached house comprises of an open hallway, toddler room, nappy changing room, children’s sanitary accommodation and kitchen area at ground floor level. Two playrooms, a sleep room, children and staff sanitary accommodation and a cleaning storage area are provided at first floor level. An outdoor play area is provided at the back of the service. Parking is available at the front of the service.
Staffing	The service is staffed by four adults. Staff have childcare qualifications at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) levels 5 to level 7. One staff member has availed of leadership for Inclusion (LINC) training. Experience in childcare varies from 4 years to 24 years. The registered provider works directly in the service.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health welfare and development of the child, Safety and premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the Inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	The Inspector(s) wish 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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both staff members work directly in 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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

The service proposes to care for the following number of children over the three rooms in the service.

Room name	Number of children	Age range	Type of service	Adults required	Adults available
Toddler room	12	2 to 3 years	Full day care	2	2
Preschool 1	5	2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months	Sessional	1	1
	4		Remaining for FDC after		

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				sessional hours		
Preschool 2	6	3 years 6 months to 6 years	Sessional	1	1	
Total	23 (12+11)			4	4	

The registered provider is seeking to increase the maximum number of children present in the service at any one time to 23 Children.

### 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

Requirement met:

This requirement has been partially met.

(1)(a) The service consists of three playrooms, the wobbler room on the ground floor with two preschool rooms located on the first floor. All rooms have a sufficient amount

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	<p>of toys and materials suitable to the age and stage of development of the child. Materials consist of jigsaws, building blocks, soft toys, sensory table, arts and crafts. Areas of interest include a home corner, a construction corner, dress up areas and a reading corner.</p> <p>The outdoor area is located to the rear of the property. This area an enclosed area, which consists of a play house, bikes and trikes and a green area for football. All materials appear in good working order.</p> <p>(b) Soft cushions and soft foam mats are available in both preschool rooms 1 and 2 for children to relax and rest while other children continued to play in the same rooms. Two standard cots and two low level beds are provided in the sleep room for children to rest and sleep in an area outside of the playrooms.</p> <p>(3) The outdoor play area is safely and securely fenced in by timber fencing and the back wall of the premises to deny both unsupervised exit by children when playing outdoors and unauthorised access to the outdoor area. A high level timber door which is latched from the inside is provided on the open gable end of the outdoor play area to deny children access to both the front of the premises and roadway. A smooth concrete path, paved area and a grass surface area are provided outdoors for children to play. Toys and play equipment observed for daily outdoor play includes play house, chalk board, mud kitchen, bikes, trikes, footballs and goal posts.</p>
Requirement not met:	(1) (b) There is no dedicated rest area in the wobbler room for a child to rest if required throughout the day.
Response from Provider:	1(b) Both written confirmation and picture evidence to support the provision of a rest area in the book corner of the wobbler room were submitted on the 14 July 2023.
Summary Comment:	The measures taken by the registered provider meets the requirements of regulation 20 (1) (b).

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### 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.*

#### Requirement Met:

This requirement has been met.

The service provided all meals and snacks for children in attendance on a part-time and full day care basis. A weekly menu was available to indicate the variety of foods provided for breakfast, snacks, dinner and evening tea. Milk and water was provided in the service for children's drinks. Parents and guardians provided all snacks for children in attendance for sessional childcare.

Refrigerated storage was provided in the kitchen off the toddler room to safely store perishable foods. Cooking, reheating and both a sink and dishwasher were provided for wash up was provided. Individual plates, cutlery and beakers were provided to serve children's meals and snacks. A low level table and chairs was provided in the toddler room close to the kitchen area for children to sit and have their meals and snacks.

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.*

Requirement Met:

This requirement has been partially met.

Infection control:

- Both the sink and dishwasher in the kitchen are available to assist with cleaning of both the rooms and toys in constant use in the service.
- Storage presses are provided in all playrooms to store toys cleaned for rotation and use in the service.
- Openable windows and an openable Velux roof window in the case of the nappy changing area and the staff toilet area are provided to ensure a good supply of fresh air directly from outside into all rooms when occupied. Restricted opening devices are placed on the windows at first floor level.
- A washhand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water is provided in the kitchen area to assist with staff handwashing during cleaning and food preparation.

Environment of the service:

- Entrance to the service is secured and a doorbell provided to assist with early and late drop offs and collections and those seeking unauthorised access to the premises.
- A high-level door latch is provided on the entrance door to guard against unsupervised exit by children when in the service.
- A locked press is located on the landing at first floor level to safely store cleaning agents and chemicals in an area outside of the playrooms.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hooks are provided in the hallway on the ground floor and on the landing to safely store children’s coats and bags off the floors.</li> <li>• Visibility strips are placed on the glass panel door leading from preschool 1 to the staff toilet area to guard against impact damage by children cared for in the playroom.</li> <li>• A high level timber gate is provided to fence off both the oil boiler and the oil tank from the outdoor play area and access by children playing outdoors.</li> </ul>
Requirement not met:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A stairgate is located on both the bottom and top of the stairs leading to two upstairs playrooms in which children over two years old are cared for. Stairgates are considered not to be suitable for children over two years old.</li> <li>2. A filing cabinet, toys and a baby chair are stored in the sleep room which prohibits the safe access to and monitoring of sleeping children in the room. Children have unsupervised access to the items stored in the sleep room while placed on the low level beds in the room.</li> <li>3. Inverted lamp shades are not provided on the open light bulbs in the sleep room and in preschool 2 to avoid the risk of glass shattering in the room in the event of breakage.</li> <li>4. Refrigerator storage is not provided for perishable foods and snacks as provided by parents and guardians for children in attendance for a sessional childcare. Lunch boxes are stored in the children’s bags.</li> </ol>
Response from Provider:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The registered provider submitted written documentation from both a chartered consultant engineer and a district assistant chief fire officer dated the 11 and 12 July 2023 respectively confirming that the use of the stairgates is allowable in view of all mitigation measures taken by the service to ensure the safety of children in attendance.</li> <li>2. Both written confirmation and picture evidence was submitted by the registered provider which confirms that all items stored in the sleep room have been removed.</li> </ol>

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	<p>3. Written confirmation and picture evidence was submitted which confirms that the lights in the sleep room and in preschool 2 have been replaced with fluorescent light fittings which are both safely secured to the ceilings and covered with shatter proof diffusers.</p> <p>4. Written confirmation and picture evidence was submitted which confirms that perishable foods and snacks provided by parents and guardians for children in attendance for sessional care in the service are stored in a stand up refrigerator in the kitchen area of the service.</p>
Summary Comment:	The measures taken by the service ensures that the requirements of Regulation 23 have been met.

### 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 is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Requirement met:	<p>This requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1) There are two staff members trained as first aid responders who are available to children attending the preschool at all times.</p> <p>(2) First aid boxes are located on both the ground floor and the first floor of the preschool. The first aid boxes contain an appropriate amount of supplies for minor injuries to be treated within the service.</p>
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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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a) A record is maintained of all fire drills as conducted in the premises. The last monthly fire drill is recorded on the 14 June 2023.

(b) The maintenance record for firefighting equipment which is wall mounted inside the front door entrance, in the kitchen and on the landing at first floor level indicates that an annual service was conducted in March 2023.

The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system indicates that a service was conducted on the 30 May 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire is on display on the entrance door to the toddler room. The fire assembly point is positioned on a tree directly across from the front door entrance to the service.

Part VI – Safety

**Regulation 28 – Insurance**

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

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

Insurance cover is available for a maximum of 25 children in daily attendance in the service. Insurance cover was valid from 28 March 2023 to 27 March 2024.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

**Regulation 29 – Premises**

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(a) The premises was observed to be in a good state of repair and maintenance on the day of inspection. There is no evidence of dampness or mould growth on internal walls and ceilings. Windows and doors appear to be both watertight and weather tight when closed. A smooth surface leads to the entrance door to the service.

(b) The service is connected to both the public drainage and water supply. Access to both the service and the outdoor play area is secured by a combination of timber fencing and high level timer doors bolted from inside above children’s height.

(c) Openable windows, velux windows in toilet and in the nappy changing area ensure good ventilation directly from outside of the building. All light fittings at ground floor level are fitted with shatter proof diffusers. The radiators in the rooms are thermostatically controlled to ensure maximum surface temperatures did not exceed 50°C.

(d) The rooms in the service are brightly painted and observed to be clean on the day of inspection. Floors with the exception of the carpet on the stairs are finished with a heavy duty floor lino which was in a good state of repair and maintenance. Bathroom walls are finished with smooth easily cleanable tiled surfaces. The service had a pest control contract for vermin and pest control. The last service visit was recorded as conducted on 19 May 2023.

(e) One toilet and one washhand basin located off the toddler room on the ground floor and the landing at first floor level endures adequate sanitary accommodation for up to 22 toilet trained children in the service. A nappy changing station and washhand

	<p>basin in the nappy changing room ensures adequate changing facilities for up to 11 children in nappies in the service. A toilet serviced with a washhand basin is provided off playroom 1 for use by staff working in the service. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins are provided adjacent to washhand basins in use in the service.</p>
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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.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*
- (4) *Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*
  - (a) *a sessional pre-school service, and*
  - (b) *a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*

<p>Requirement met:</p>	<p>This requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1) Adequate floor space is provided in the three playrooms in the service for the proposed maximum number of children in daily attendance in the rooms.</p> <p>(2) An area of 39.13m<sup>2</sup> ensures that adequate floor space is provided in the toddler room for a proposed maximum of 12 children in the age range 2 to 3 years in daily attendance for part-time and full daycare.</p>
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(4) An area of 10.81m<sup>2</sup> ensures that adequate floor space is provided in preschool 1 for the proposed maximum of 5 children in the age range 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months in daily attendance with 4 of the children remaining in the room after sessional hours for part-time and full daycare.

An area of 11.05m<sup>2</sup> ensures that adequate floor space is provided for a proposed maximum of 6 children in the age range 3 years six months to 6 years in daily attendance for sessional care.