

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO034		
Name of Service:	Little Leprechauns Creche & Montessori		
Address of Service:	Willowbrook Centre, Bellaghy, Charlestown, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	n/a		
Name of Registered Provider:	Cathy Davey		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	14/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM 36
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		

Authority to Inspect

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

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Little Leprechauns Crèche and Montessori is a registered full day care and sessional service that has been in operation since 2008. The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 75 children from 1-6 years. The service is operated from a purpose-built premises situated in the village of Bellaghy, Co Sligo. There are five dedicated playrooms for use by the children. A dedicated sleep room is available off the Wobbler room for the children under two years old. An enclosed outdoor area is provided to the rear of the premises where the children have access to outdoor play equipment with a separate dedicated sectioned off area for use by the children aged 1 to 2 years from the Wobbler Room.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were twelve adults providing direct care to the children with another adult providing relief cover for breaks. The person in charge worked directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider worked in the office.

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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 15 records of preschool children, 19 Health welfare and development of the child, 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of the child, 25 First aid and 28 Insurance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re-occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the *registered provider, person in charge, staff and children* who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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) (a) (b).

The records of all 13 adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all 13 adults employed in the service.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for all 13 adults in the service.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as all the adults employed in the service that had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Thirteen adults 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.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were twelve adults working directly with 49 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and nine adults working directly with 36 children in the afternoon. There was an additional staff member available to cover breaks throughout the day.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*

(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;

(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

20 records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early years inspector.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

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, and

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

Physical and Material Environment:

The five care rooms were laid out to facilitate sensory experiences for the child through arts and crafts and sensory tables including water and rice. Fine motor development was supported using jigsaws, pins and threading puzzles. Opportunities for imaginary and role play were provided in the home corner and dress up area as well as construction area and farm animal areas. The younger rooms of the wobbler and toddler rooms were resourced with equipment suitable to the age and stage of development of the young children in these rooms, including home corners, construction areas, animals, and musical instruments. All equipment was stored on open shelving at children's heights so that choice can be facilitated.

The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. The outdoor area provided two different outdoor areas with various resources including tunnels, tyres slides, swings ride on toys and bikes and trikes, mud kitchens and playhouses. There was a large wooden climbing frame and slide in one area. These areas provided an opportunity for children to develop gross motor skills and develop their imagination. There is smaller outdoor area with direct access to the wobbler and toddler rooms provided opportunities for gross motor skill development appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children utilising this area. On the day the children in the wobbler room were observed enjoying this space in weather appropriate clothing including wellies and wet gear.

Supporting Relationships:

Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care. During mealtimes the staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The staff members sat at the children's level when feeding the younger children or when assisting the children to feed themselves. The younger child were held and cuddled as needed throughout the day. There was evidence of familiarity between the staff and children as conversations were had about activities over the weekend and plans for Christmas with families.

The service took measures to support the children's relationships including keeping parents and guardians fully informed of the daily activities. This was completed through the use of an application where parents received real time information in relation to the children's eating, sleeping and nappy changing. Pictures of families displayed on the walls in the care rooms ensured children's connection to home was maintained. This service had made effort to get to know the child and care rooms displayed various art work such as 'our team' and 'Rainbows' which documented important information about the children including their likes and dislikes, family members and any special requirements. This ensured that all staff members working with the children had a knowledge of the important information.

Basic Needs:

The service operated a four-week meal plan which provided breakfast dinner and snacks for the children availing of full day care. On the day a main meal of chicken casserole was provided which the children enjoyed. Snacks on the day included fruit and crackers and pancakes. Children who availed of the sessional service brought in their snack from home and these included wraps, sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts. Drinking water was freely available throughout the day and stored on shelving easily accessible to children in all care rooms. In Montessori 2, independence was promoted where children got their own lunch from their bags and poured their own drinks. Nappy changing was observed and positive engagement and interaction with the children were observed throughout this process. The older children who were toileting independently were prompted to do so and supervised from a distance.

The sleep needs of the younger children were met, this was observed on the day by children sleeping at a structured time of 11:45 to 14:00. One sleep room was in use in the service and cots were assigned to individual children. Sleep was monitored by physical checks from staff a minimum of every ten minutes. The older children who required sleep were brought to one of the care rooms where the room was darkened, and soft music played to support sleep and rest. A staff member remained in this room throughout.

Programme of Activities:

Ongoing observations and assessments were documented which helped create a well-rounded picture of each child and their learnings. Observations were individual to the child and recorded tasks completed and goals for the future. Childrens language development was observed to be supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling. On the day of inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. Turn taking and sharing was promoted, this was evidenced in all rooms on the day.

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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were three highchairs with harness safety straps fitted in good condition.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.

- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and when interviewed staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.
- A detailed support plan was in place for one child who had epilepsy and staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding same.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with a total of ten standard cots.
- The sleep room temperature measured 19.7°C on the day of inspection which is line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was no toilet seats provided in the sanitary area of the Montessori 1 room for children.

Infection Control:

2. On the day children in the wobbler and toddler room did not routinely wash their hands after nappy change posing a risk of contamination.
3. Staff members were observed not to wash their hands between nappy changes.
4. There was no waterproof covering on all 10 cot mattresses, therefore cot mattresses could not be cleaned after use.

Safe Sleep:

5. Fleece blankets were observed to be in use for children under two in the wobbler room. Cellular blankets are recommended for all children under two years of age.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The RP stated that we are trying to source toilet seats to fit as they are child sized toilets and are over 10 years old they have stopped producing the actually toilet seat to fit. We have gotten 2 different ones but they do not fit correctly. We will replace the whole toilet if a replacement seat cannot be sourced. Time frame is one month.

Infection Control:

2. Children in the toddler and wobbler rooms will be assisted in washing their hands after each nappy change.
3. Staff have been instructed to read our policies on infection control as a reminder of the importance of this policy.
4. I have purchased waterproof covers for all 10 cots.

Safe Sleep:

5. Cellular blankets are provided for all children under 2. Parents have been informed that we cannot use t fleece blankets for those children under two years of age

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentary evidence submitted

Infection Control:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Safe Sleep:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted and the capa response for the non-compliances found in relation to regulation 23 on inspection have been reviewed. The inspectorate has accepted the registered providers response outlined in the capa and these corrective actions will be reviewed on next inspection. 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 six staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b).

Fully stocked first aid boxes are available in each of the care rooms and are available to children at all times.

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 a current insurance cover valid until 27.03.2024. The insurance provided cover for 75 Children.