

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO036				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Pathways Creche & Montessori				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Dorrins Strand, Strandhill, Co. Sligo				
<b>Eircode:</b>	F91 X316				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Caroline Gannon				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	05/12/2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>37</td> <td>PM</td> <td>35</td> </tr> </table>	AM	37	PM	35
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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				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little pathways Crèche and Montessori is a privately owned, purpose built childcare facility which has been in operation since 2008. It is located in a residential area in the seaside town of Strandhill, Co. Sligo. Full day, part time and sessional care for children from one to six years of age is offered. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 17:15 hours at this time. The facility is in a two storey building but the service operates from the ground floor only. There are three preschool rooms in operation currently, Toddler Room, Montessori and another Preschool room.

### Staffing

On the day of inspection nine adults were employed in the service, seven adults working directly with the children. The registered provider works mainly in the office however is able to work directly with the children as required.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 17 Information to parents, 19 Health welfare and development of the child, 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child, 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The named person to deputise was the person in charge on the morning of inspection and was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place including room lead leaders.

(2)

The files of all nine staff employed in the service were made available to the inspector for review.

(a) There were written validated references available from previous employers for all nine adults employed in the service.

(b) References from other sources were also available for adults, as appropriate, for example for adults who had no previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting was available for all nine adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for two adults for whom it was required.

(3) The procedures specified above had been carried out prior to adults' employment in the service.

(4) Seven adults had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 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 service. There were five adults working directly with thirty-seven children in the morning and six adults caring for thirty-five children in the afternoon. The person in charge was also available.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in regulation.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that all parents are kept up to date with information in relation to their preschool child attending the service. This information is outlined to parents at enrolment. Information including the type of service provided, fees, staff qualifications, adult child ratios and policy and procedures are displayed on notice boards for families throughout the service. The service provides families with regular updates through various applications and the use of email.

## 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.*

#### Compliance Information

On the day of inspection three care rooms were in operation. All care rooms were equipped with suitable materials and resources to support the children attending those rooms. The Montessori room was suitably decorated with the children's artwork adding colour to the walls. The resources available in this room supported the children to develop fine motor skills with threading beading, puzzles, and jigsaws. Childrens imagination could be stimulated with the home corner and construction areas. The messy play areas with sand and water provided

opportunity for creativity and exploration. The toddler room consisted of materials and resources suitable to the age and stage of development of younger children, these included musical instruments, dolls and teddys, building blocks, puzzles, and jigsaws. The preschool room similar to, the Montessori room was resourced with materials to stimulate the child's imagination and create opportunities for learning. The outdoor area provided opportunities for gross motor skill development with bikes, trikes, slides, and playhouses. This outdoor courtyard was accessible from all care rooms and the service ensured that all children had the opportunity throughout the day to avail of this space regardless of inclement weather. All children had appropriate clothing to ensure access to the outdoors in the colder and wetter weather.

The curriculum provided to the children was evident on the day. In the Montessori room the children were eager to discuss the solar system and what planets were safe to live on. Individual observations are recorded on an application and sent home for parents to view. In the preschool room, the children were busy making homemade pizza, which they had later for lunch. The staff member used this time of cooking and preparing food as an opportunity to discuss tastes and inform the children where various food comes from. In the toddler room, evidence of the curriculum was displayed on the wall in the form of handprinted Christmas trees and various artwork.

The service took measures to support the children's relationship with home and displayed photographs of families on the wall. Information was provided to the families in real time by way of an application. The younger room used handovers and emails to communicate with the parents.

The service provided all snacks and meals, and they were cooked onsite. Some children availing of the sessional service choose to bring in their own lunches, however meals were also offered to these children on the day. The morning snack provided by the service consisted of a fruit platter with melon, orange, and apple, served with crackers or toast. Drinking water was freely available throughout the session. The main meal of the day included sausages mash and carrots with an alternative of pasta if required. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed where the older children took turns in helping the staff members set up tables and provide drinks. Staff sat with children through mealtimes, promoting independence in feeding, but going support if required.

Children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently and supervised from a distance. Nappy changing was observed on the day to be in line with policy, changes occurred as required and documented for information for parents.

The individual sleep needs of the children were met, the younger children slept at various points of the day, when staff responded to the cues of the children. A scheduled sleep time after lunch was also provided. There were rest areas provided in all care rooms, therefore the older children could rest if they wished throughout 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.
- The service had a separate entrance for the Montessori room which was secure and monitored.
- 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.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool 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.
- 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 and the importance of communicating administration of medication with parents.

##### Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with a total of two standard cots and six floor beds.
- The sleep room temperature measured 17.5°C on the day of inspection which is line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

## Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Child friendly fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- All firefighting equipment had been serviced in May 2023

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

## Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider had provided enrolment books in all care rooms. On review of these enrolment books, it was evident that the service had ensured all children's arrival and departure times are recorded.
- 3 (a) (b).  
On arrival to the service the person in charge requested the inspector sign the visitors' book. On review of this book all persons apart from those listed (i) to (iv) have been recorded in the visitor's book and the person has been given authorisation to enter.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The Registered provider ensured that adequate insurance cover was available for 66 children availing of a full day care service up until the 27/03/2024.