

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO037		
Name of Service:	Little People's Playworld Creche		
Address of Service:	Unit 3, Finisklin Industrial Estate, Sligo, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 C2FF		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jackie Mahon		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	30/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM 22
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 and M Riordan		
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 People's Playworld Creche is a privately owned and operated preschool service located within an industrial estate in Sligo town. The service is registered for the provision of a full day care service for children aged between 0-6 years and operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm, Monday to Thursday and 7.45am to 5.15pm on Fridays. The facility is also registered to provide a service to school age children each afternoon. The service operates from a single-story building containing five care rooms, a sleep room, a dining room and a kitchen. A large, secure outdoor play area is located to the side and front of the premises

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the service. There are an additional 6 staff employed to work at the facility. There is a staff employed to prepare, cook and serve meals to the children each day. All staff have the required qualifications in Early Childhood care and education.

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, 11, 16k, 20, 23, 25 and 26. 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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 31st of May in relation to a safety concern under Regulation 23. The registered provider issued a response on the 31st of May to address this concern.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation 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 person in charge and person available to deputise as required when the service was in operation.

(c)

There is a clear structure of management in the preschool service with childcare workers, room leaders, deputy person in charge and person in charge.

(2)

On review of information from the last inspection dated 21 November 2023. There was just one new adult employed in the service. The following information is in relation to the new employee.

(a) (b)

Two written and verified past employer references were available for this adult.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required for the adult recently employed as the adult had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

This adult had attained a major award 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 seven adults working directly with 25 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios and considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Toddler Room: 2 adults cared for 3 children aged 1 to 2 years and 7 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Preschool 1: 2 adults cared for 6 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

Preschool 2: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.

At 15:30 in the afternoon the adult: child ratios were found to be as follows:

Toddler Room: 2 adults cared for 3 children aged 1 to 2 years and 7 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Preschool 2: 3 adults cared for 13 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of 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, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1) (k)

The registered provider ensured that the service kept adequate records in relation to details of any accident or incident involving a preschool child attending the service. A sample of records were reviewed which included evidence of immediate actions taken following an accident or incident, risk assessments undertaken to reduce the probability of this incident reoccurring and details of communication with the parent or guardian.

(2)

The registered provider is aware of the regulatory requirement to maintain these records for the period of two years from the date in which the preschool child attends the service.

(3)

These records were available on the day for inspection by the authorised person.

(4)

The registered provider demonstrated that records of any accident or incident is made available to the parent or guardian of the preschool child.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The preschool service consists of four rooms to accommodate the preschool children. Three rooms were in operation on the day of the inspection. All rooms are laid out with clear interest areas developed. All areas had the required resources and props accessible to support play and learning for all taking into account each child's age and stage of development. Interest areas included home corners with play equipment, construction areas to stimulate imaginative play. Puzzles and tabletop to promote fine motor skill development. All rooms consisted of

an arts and crafts area to stimulate creativity and a library area with books that were age appropriate to promote language development. All resources were stored in open low-level shelving to facilitate choice. The care rooms had recently been redecorated and the rooms reorganised resulting in spaces that were clean organised and free from clutter, which allowed for the children to move freely from one interest area to the next directing their own play and learning.

The outdoor area provided an alternative environment for the preschool child. A large grassed area was accessible with climbing frames, swings, slides, and playhouses accessible in this space. Adjacent is a tarmac area equipped with mud kitchens, wooden playhouses, and goal posts. Resources stored in a shed such as bikes, trikes, footballs provide opportunities for gross motor skill development.

(1) (b)

The registered provider has ensured there are adequate and suitable facilities for the preschool children to rest during the day. There is a designated sleep room with 3 standard cots accessible for children under 2 years to sleep in. Each cot has the required waterproof covering. Individual bed linen is provided, and these are stored in labelled baskets for individual use and are laundered weekly. Floor beds are also provided in the sleep room for children aged over two years who require a rest throughout the day. The sleep room is laid out to ensure that staff can move around the cot or floor bed easily to provide for the children's care needs. All windows in the sleep room have black out blinds so the lighting is reduced to a level where the staff member who remains in the room can conduct visual checks throughout sleep time.

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 premises was securely locked when the inspectors arrived unannounced 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.
- 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 the care rooms.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals, after using the toilet and after playing outside.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with a total of four standard cots and six floor beds.
- All cot mattresses had the recommended waterproof protectors to ensure adequate cleaning between use and reduce the risk of cross infection.
- Children had individual bed linen that was laundered weekly or more often as necessary.
- During the designated sleep time an adult remained in the room at all times.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area a sand box was observed to have a large accumulation of stagnant water which could pose a risk of safety to the preschool child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider in a written response stated:

1. The outdoor sand-tray has been removed from the setting. A discussion took place with staff where it was agreed that any future sand trays for the outdoor area will be stored in the shed when not in use.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

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

(2) (a) (b)

The registered provider ensured that suitably stocked first aid box was available to the preschool children and stored in an accessible position in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
On the day of inspection, the service could not provide certified evidence that any staff member on duty had completed First Aid Responder training. An Immediate action notice under regulation 23 was issued in relation to this issue on the 30th of May 2024. Information received on the 31st of May from the registered provider stated that 3 staff had completed a basic first aid course on line and all staff were enrolled to completed First Aid Responder training on the 22nd of June 2024 and would submit evidence to the inspectorate once completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

All staff working in Little People's have completed 3 days of FAR training on the 22nd June, 28th June and 29th June. The training officer will source a refresher in adequate time to ensure there is no lapse in training. The service aims to source a refresher FAR by May 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to Regulation 25.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*
- (3) 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) (b)

The register provider ensured that a list of all firefighting equipment and smoke detection systems were available for review. The most recent maintenance of this equipment was dated the 28th of November 2023 and 25th of April 2024.

(2) (c)

On the day these records were made available for inspection by the authorised person.

(3)

The registered provider is aware of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for a period of 5 years after their creation.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The most recent fire evacuation drill was recorded as the 22nd of February 2024. This is not in line with the requirement of monthly evacuation drills in a preschool service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

The paperwork for fire-drills that were carried out were misplaced and have now been located and placed into the correct folder. A discussion took place with the fire-officer and all staff members about ensuring records are stored in the correct place at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to Regulation 26.