

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY039		
Name of Service:	Little Explorers Playschool		
Address of Service:	Cuilin House, Brittas Road, Thurles, Tipperary		
Eircode:	E41 N8Y2		
Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Delahunty		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12 January 2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Tipperary		
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney		
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

TÚSLA An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach Child and Family Agency	Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 QMS Ref: EYI-RRT12.1 V1.0 20/10/2022 Service ID: TU2015TY039	1 of 9
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This sessional service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm, for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from repurposed rooms in the registered providers residence, on the outskirts of the town of Thurles in north Tipperary. The service has separate entrance and exit doors to the main residence. The children have access to two activity rooms, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas including an outdoor room.

Staffing

The registered provider, with two staff, works directly with the children each day. All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the national framework of qualifications.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, and 26.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) Staff files were not reviewed as part of the inspection as there had been no change in staff since the last inspection on 29 September 2020.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the national framework of qualifications.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were 3 staff working directly with 20 children aged between 3 and 5 years old, who attended on a sessional basis.

(3) The adult/child ratio was maintained at 1: 7 throughout the session, which was greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11.

(8)(c) There were at least two staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

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.*

(4) *Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.*

Compliance Information

(a) The children had access to two activity rooms, an enclosed outdoor room and an outdoor play area. The front room was available to the children as a quiet room, for rest, storytelling or for small group activities away from the main activity room. The main activity room had two distinct spaces with the front area used for floor activities, large group activities such as musical chairs, small world play and imaginative play. The enclosed outdoor room was directly accessible from the main activity room which enabled the children to flow freely between these spaces according to their own wishes and interests. The outdoor area was at the back and side of the premises.

(b) The children could rest and relax in the front room at any time during the day. This room was furnished with a large sofa, cushions and blankets. There were blinds on the windows to reduce the amount of natural light entering the room when the children wanted a darkened room, for example, for sensory play with lights.

(4) The outdoor play area was divided into two sections: a garden playground with a grass surface, enclosed by wooden fencing and a yard with a concrete surface enclosed by fences and gates. There was a large gate at the side of the premises which was kept secured to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to the front of the premises and the main road beyond. There were storage sheds for outdoor equipment and ride on vehicles. The

children could access the outdoor area for play on a daily basis, with some exceptions due to weather, such as during high winds.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service was well laid out and furnished with child height tables, chairs and storage units. The front room was furnished with a sofa, a small table with two chairs, floor mat and cushions. Equipment included sensory materials and books. The children could bring toys from the main activity room to play with into this room.

The front section of the main activity room was surrounded by free-standing play resources such as the kitchen, shop, work bench and dress-up clothes rail, as well as open shelving units with removable, labelled storage boxes of toys and equipment. The centre of the room was covered with a large mat where the children could engage in floor play with the materials available on the shelves.

The back section of the main activity room was set up with tables and chairs where the children engaged in table-top activities such as drawing, colouring, play dough, small brick construction and sensory play (sticky sand, lentils, musical instruments, wooden balancing shapes). This area was also used as a dining space.

The covered outdoor room was furnished with storage areas for outdoor boots, seating areas and messy play resources such as sand play tables, water play, large construction, small world centres.

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.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy and there was a visual reminder about healthy eating beside the entrance door. The children brought a packed lunch which was eaten together at 10.30am. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge in the kitchenette. The children brought drinks of water, squash and juice. There was a sink in the kitchenette where the children's drink bottles could be refilled with drinking water when they were empty. The children's drink bottles were accessible to them throughout the morning so that they could take a drink when they needed one.

The children were allowed to bring a treat to eat as part of their lunch on Fridays.

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) A written record was maintained of the arrival and departure times of the children. The registered provider or a member of staff was responsible for recording the children's attendance.

(3)(a) The registered provider ensured that only authorised persons entered the premises while it was in operation.

(b) A record was maintained of any visitors to the service, such as the early years inspector.

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) The registered provider and another member of staff held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available in a cupboard in the kitchenette of the service. The door of the cupboard is labelled to indicate that the first aid box was located there.

(b) The first aid box was available if required for use by one of the children.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a written record of the fire drills that were carried out in the service.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the entrance lobby of the service.