

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY123		
Name of Service:	Little Rascals Playgroup		
Address of Service:	Rackhill, Carrickbeg, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary		
Eircode:	E32 D634		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lillian Clery		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	06/12/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM 13
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen		
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 Rascals Playgroup is a privately owned part-time day care service. The service is in the town of Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary. The service operates from a detached building on the grounds of the registered provider's home, which consists of two classrooms, a loft and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor classroom and play spaces are available around the property. Little Rascals operates 9:15am to 1:00pm which includes a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme from 9.15am to 12.15pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks per year.

Staffing

The service currently employs four staff members and the registered provider who also works directly with children. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 6, and 8 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(2) – Staffing levels, 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child, 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance, 25 - First Aid, 26 – Fire Safety Measures, and Regulation 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.

Additional Information

A referral was made to the local authority fire officer in relation to the smoke detection system.

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

(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)(c) The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer, inclusion coordinator and designated liaison person for example.

(2) Records were reviewed for the five staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above 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.

(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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(2) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 25 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 5 staff members.

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

Compliance Information

Interactions between children and staff members were warm and reciprocal. Staff members skilfully supported and extended children's play when required, offering additional materials and resources. An example of this was observed when a child showed interest in a straw and connectors resource. A staff member brought the resource to an activity tray and a small group activity with multiple children developed. Staff members sat with children during morning snack and engaged in conversation with and listened attentively to the children as they spoke.

Children's identity and belonging within the class group was fostered through celebration of life events such as birthdays, as was evidenced through the birthday celebration for one child on the day of inspection.

Displays of birthday and family walls along with a key worker system, supported connections between individual children, their peer group and staff members.

A 'who's here today' interactive display made connections between home and the service. Children demonstrated confidence in their environment, telling staff members and other children of life outside of the early years service, in particular planned trips with family members to visit local seasonal events and trips to a local coffee shop for hot chocolate.

Both the bumble bee and ladybird rooms were well laid out and resourced. Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner, cosy library, small world play, and construction areas of the room.

The home corner was creatively designed to reflect a real-life home environment, with a small toddler sized bed along with pillow and duvet to support roleplay. Dress up materials and a mirror along with a well-resourced and laid out kitchen area were also available for use by the children. Displays developed by the children demonstrated that the space was also used to role play 'Suir Café' with menus and other materials available.

The library/cosy area was in a loft space accessed via wooden stairs. Children had access to comfortable seating, a dolls house, story books. The low ceiling height, faux houseplants and fairy lights created an inviting space for children. Children could choose the slide or stairs to descend to the classroom below.

There were several outdoor spaces available for the children to access daily. A covered canopy area with an all-weather surface was accessed directly from the building. This space had several resources for children to engage with including an activity tray and large building blocks. An adjoining cabin was designated as an outdoor classroom which had wipeable couches, two child sized timber benches, a library, open and accessible storage with musical instruments and a selection of play materials.

A large storage shed was used to store a large range of ride on and wheeled vehicles which the children were observed to use on the large concrete play area. Children were appropriately dressed for the wet weather on the day of inspection with all-weather clothing which ensured they could access outdoor play daily. A third grass area was also available for use, which contained a large selection of fixed timber play structures. A cabin, slide, sandpit, large mud kitchen and timber seating supported children's play.

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) Records confirmed that each child was checked in on arrival at the service and checked out on departure by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b) A visitor register was used to record all persons entering the premises. This book was presented to the inspector on arrival at the service.

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) There was a person trained in first aid available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in the lobby of the premises and was available for the use of the children attending the early years service.

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.

(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 record of fire drills which had taken place monthly in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 16 November 2023.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in the entrance lobby of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) While it is acknowledged that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 13 June 2023, the smoke alarm system was not maintained annually by a competent contractor and was last serviced 23 April 2021.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A competent contractor was booked to have the fire alarms tested on January the 9th 2024. The manager will ensure that yearly appointments are made to test the Fire Alarms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certificate of servicing of smoke alarm system.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for a part time service for 33 children. The insurance policy commenced 28 March 2023 and will expire 27 March 2024.