

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY127
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Name of Service:	Lullabies and Laughter
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Address of Service:	Aherlow Community Creche, Lisvernane, Glen of Aherlow, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E34 X932
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jane Leonard
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	14
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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

Lullabies and Laughter was established in 2009 to provide early learning and care to children aged 1 to 6 years old. The service offers full day, part time and sessional programmes, Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 6:00pm. A school aged service is also provided. The premises is a purpose-built single storey detached building, with three early years rooms, sanitary accommodation, kitchen and staff areas. The outdoor area is divided into three spaces for use by each age group.

Staffing

The service currently employs thirteen staff members, ten of whom were working directly with children on the day of inspection. The manager works in an administrative capacity and an onsite chef is also employed. The registered provider does not work in service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

9 (1)(2)(4)(7) – Management and Recruitment

11 (1)(2)(8) – Staffing levels

19 (1)(a)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child

23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included toddler, junior and senior preschool rooms.

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 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer and designated liaison person for example.

Documentation was reviewed for the thirteen staff members employed by the service.

(2)(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 three staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over six months.

(4) A certificate of qualification was available on file demonstrating that staff members who worked directly with children held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)(b)(c) Evidence of initial induction of new staff members was available. Staff members had been trained in the services policies and procedures. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the content of these policies in discussion with the inspector.

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 were working directly with the children at all times. There were 34 children with 9 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection. The manager and deputy manager were available for cover in each room as required throughout the day.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the wobbler room, there were 7 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the junior preschool room, there were 10 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- The senior preschool room, there were 17 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.

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

(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

(1)(a)

Staff members were observed to support children who had recently started in the service during their settling in period. An individual approach was taken to ensure the transition to preschool was as smooth as possible for each child. Some children were supported individually or in smaller groups, others were working towards staying for the full session on a phased basis. A photograph prop titled 'My first day of preschool 2023' was observed in the preschool room. Parent communication was supported during this time by phone calls and use of the service communication application.

Strategies were in place to support day to day transitions from one activity to the next. For example, from outdoors to indoors and before mealtimes. Verbal warnings were given and a transition or clean up song was used. An interactive game was used in the senior preschool room of children versus teachers to promote a tidy up transition. Children were observed to engage enthusiastically to return play materials to storage. The service also had a system in place where staff transition from room to room with the child group. For example, children who recently moved from the junior to senior preschool room had the same key staff working with them in their new room.

The indoor areas were bright, warm, and fostered children's identity and belonging through the display of works of art and photographs.

Children could freely access materials and resources from low-level shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner, construction small world play, sand or water trays, and puzzles areas of the rooms. Children's literacy development was promoted with a well laid out library areas. Books and dress up materials were available for use by the children.

The outdoor environments were designed to provide children with opportunities to engage in a range of activities. Two partially covered areas had interest areas such as a library, kitchen, sensory trays and construction among others. The dedicated areas for the different age ranges of children ensured that developmentally appropriate resources were available. Wheeled toys and balance bicycles were available for use.

(b)

All snacks and meals were prepared onsite daily by the service chef. A three-week menu was available and all allergens listed. On the day the morning snack consisted of a ham and cheese omelette, fresh fruit and toast. The midday hot meal was beef stroganoff served with mashed potatoes and the afternoon snack was fruit salad and rice cakes. Fresh fruit was available in each room for children to eat outside of mealtimes.

Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required. Snack and mealtimes varied from room to room, depending on the age range of children and food requirements. Consideration was given to individual dietary requirements of children with modified or separate meals and snacks provided.

Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves. Milk or water were served with meals and snacks.

Children who were toilet trained, used the toilet as needed and handwashing was promoted. Attention was given to children's appearance, staff were observed to clean children's faces and hands, and change clothes which were wet after water play for example.

Sleep was child led and staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure consistency between home and service routines. Each child had a dedicated cot, over which a sleep routine with specific sleep preferences were detailed. Children were placed to sleep when signs of tiredness were recognised by staff, this was observed in the toddler room and junior preschool room when children were placed to sleep as required during the day. Rooms used for sleeping were sufficiently dark and quiet to promote a restful sleep.

Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. An outdoor rota was observed in use between the junior and senior preschool rooms and children were observed in the outdoor area 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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Hinge guard protectors were in place on all door which posed a risk of injury to children. Room temperatures were monitored in each room by staff on from the in room digital display.

All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them, for example small items which may pose a risk of choking were not observed in rooms occupied by younger children. The outdoor play areas were maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play, and toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Each room had designated children's toilets or a nappy changing area. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and liquid soap. Cots were placed the required 50cm apart.

Administration of Medication:

Staff members were familiar with the service policy on administration of medication. Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing.

A staff member remained in the room while children were sleeping on low level beds. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each sleep room. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

The sleep room temperature was recorded at 24.3°C, which exceeded the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one. It is acknowledged that outdoor temperatures were in excess of 25°C on the day of inspection and measures were taken by the service to reduce the temperature in the room and keep children cool.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

The service will ensure that all blinds are down and windows are open. Fans will be used as appropriate. Children will be offered lots of fluids and the service will ensure light clothing is on children. The service is exploring options in the long to see if they can invest in an air conditioning system.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

Short- and long-term action plan.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. This will be assessed on the next inspection.