

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015WD042

**Name of Service:** Little Einsteins Pre-school

**Address of Service:** Kilronan, Butlerstown, Co. Waterford

**Eircode:** X91 WF9F

**Name of Registered Provider:** Susan Molloy

**Service type:** Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 27/02/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM	26
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 AE10

**Inspection undertaken by:** Lorraine O' Connor

**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

### Description of service

Little Einsteins Pre-school is located in Butlerstown, on the outskirts of Waterford City. It is a sessional and part-time service which caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. The service provides a morning sessional service from 9.30am to 12.30pm as part of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. A part-time service is offered from 9am to 2pm. The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 33 children at any one time.

The service is adjoining a residential premises. There are two care rooms available: the Junior room (2 to 3 years old) and the Senior room (2 to 5 years old). An outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises. There is a sanitary area adjoining each of the care rooms. A kitchen area is available within the Senior room.

### Staffing

The service employs four adults to work directly with the children, including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, there were three adults present. Two students who were on placement were also present within the service.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management and recruitment, Regulation 11 -Staffing, Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service, Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child and Regulation 25 - First Aid. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service.

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
- (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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.
  - (b) A deputy person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) A total of 6 files were reviewed and the following was available:
- (a)(b) Written validated references were available for the 6 adults from a previous employer and/or a source other than a previous employer.

(c) The required Garda Vetting disclosures were in place for the 6 adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required for one adult, and it was available for review.

(3) Recruitment and vetting procedures were carried out in advance of appointment for all staff.

(4) The adults working directly with the children held 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.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(2)(4)

There was an adequate number of adults working with the children for the duration of the inspection. At 10am, there was 3 adults working with 28 pre-school children aged 2- 5 years. Two students were present within the service and provided additional support when required.

The adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. The following was observed by the inspector:

- At 10am, there was 1 adult present with 8 children aged 2-3 years in the Junior room. There was 20 children aged 2 to 5 years present with 2 adults in the Senior room.

- At 1.15pm, the children attending on a part-time basis from both care rooms were in the outdoor area. There was a total of 26 children with 3 adults present. The two students were available to provide support as required.

### 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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

#### Compliance Information

(1)

- (h) Children’s attendance was recorded within the two care rooms. On review, the record was reflective of the children present. The attendance records were maintained and updated by the staff members for example, when children departed the service at 12pm.
- (j) Administration of medication records were not available for review. The named person in charge explained that the service does not routinely administer medication to children attending the service. The service’s policy was reflective of the practices discussed.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(k) A sample of the accident and incident records were reviewed. While it is acknowledged that the records included details of the accident and/or incident, the following was noted:

- The records did not demonstrate that it was shared with the child’s parent and/or guardian.
- The date of the accident was not consistently recorded.
- The full name of the child was not consistently recorded.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(k) The accident and incident book has been updated and the parents have signed the required pages. The service will check the book at the end of each day and make sure that any accidents or incidents recorded are completed correctly.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A photograph of the signed accident and incident records.

#### **Summary Comment**

The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service.

### 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**

The interactions between the children and staff were calm and playful. The staff members and students were overheard to engage in meaningful conversation with the children. The interactions which were observed were calm, with low tones, eye contact and at the children's eye level. The adults supported the children to lead the conversation through many strategies such as asking questions to extend the child's thinking and pausing to wait to the child to respond. Interactions were unhurried with staff members providing time to each child to have a conversation or listening to the child's story. Children were overheard to have many conversations with the staff members about their interests which included horses, food and singing. Staff members used playful tones with the children and animated expressions. For example,

- In the Junior Room, after reading a story the staff member playfully asked the children why they thought the bear was chasing the children in the story. One child responded with 'maybe he wanted to play'. Another child explained that they wouldn't like a bear hunt, as they loved dinosaurs. The staff member extended these conversations with the children through asking playful questions.

- In the Senior Room, when the children were taking part in circle time one child spoke about their horse. The staff member extended this conversation with the child and recognised other children who enjoyed horse riding too. The children were fully engaged and eager to share their own story. The staff members supported the children and their interests through providing time for the children to share their own story including what they wear while horse riding. The staff member asked extending questions during this group conversation including ‘what do we wear on our head?’ with all the children responding excitedly with ‘a helmet’. This was further extended through asking the children ‘why do you wear a helmet?’.

Children brought their lunches and snacks from home. The children’s water bottles were easily accessible within the care rooms. Lunchtime was relaxed and at the children’s pace. The children were provided ample time to eat their food and engage in conversation with their peers. The staff members encouraged conversations between the children for example, recognising that two children had similar food or asking in what shop they bought the food. This encouraged conversations between the children on their favourite food and shops that they visit. The staff members sat with the children at lunchtime and supported the children to open the food items. The staff members discussed with the inspector that lunchtime was a key part of the day for the children and provided them with many learning opportunities. It was outlined that the staff members would encourage the children to develop skills such as opening the food packing or peeling their fruit. This practice was observed on the day for example, the staff members opened bananas and encouraged the children to peel it. The staff members provided the children with recognition of their achievements and provided additional support if required. These practices supported children’s independence and their sense of autonomy.

The two care rooms provided children with an environment which was accessible and supported the children to be independent in their play choices. Each room had interest areas for the children which included

- A home corner with play kitchens, dolls, and buggies
- Dress up clothes,
- Book area
- Small world play which included dolls houses, dinosaurs, figures,
- Rest area

- Car mats and cars,
- Art easel,
- Sensory tables.

The children were observed to freely play with the equipment which was at a low level and easily accessible on low level shelving. This included blocks, animals, jigsaws and magnetic construction toys.

The children engaged in outdoor play during the morning and afternoon of the inspection. The children were provided with an environment which encouraged play and movement. The layout of the outdoor area encouraged the children's play through providing various areas including a play house, water wall and seated area. The children were provided with equipment to encourage movement such as a climbing frame, balance bikes, trikes and cars. Within the outdoor area, there were open spaces which supported children to use the balance bikes, to run and play freely. The staff member outlined that the children also have access to a grass area to the rear of the premises. The staff members and students were observed to be positioned within various areas to provide support, solutions and encouragement to the children.

## 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.*

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety

1. The linoleum flooring within the Senior and Junior room posed an increased trip hazard for the children and staff. The flooring had visible cracks and the heavy-duty tape which was placed on numerous areas of flooring was observed to be peeling. It is acknowledged that the named person outlined that works were due to commence on replacing the flooring in both of the care rooms.

#### Infection Control:

2. Children were not provided with warm water to wash their hands in the sanitary areas in the Junior and Senior room. The water was cold to touch. This was at variance of the service's infection control policy which stated thermostatically controlled water is available for handwashing.

3. The children in the Junior and Senior rooms were provided with communal handtowels in the sanitary areas. This practice was at variance of the service's infection control policy which stated disposable paper towels are provided for washing and drying of hands. This practice posed a risk of the spread of infection.
4. Children's lunches were not refrigerated and were stored within the care room. At snack time, perishable foods including cooked meats, yogurts and cheese were observed to be within the children's lunchboxes. This practice posed an increased risk of infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The new linoleum flooring is scheduled to be laid during the summer holidays when the preschool is closed. A photograph will be submitted when it has been done.

##### Infection Control:

2. Warm water is available in both rooms. Both of the rooms have a controlled unit which re-heats the water when used. The water temperature has been increased on the unit in the senior room.
3. The handtowels have been removed and new paper dispensers have been placed in both of the rooms.
4. Lunches are now placed into sandwich bags and placed into the fridge in the Junior room. A new fridge has been ordered for the Senior room.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### Infection Control:

Photograph of the unit to control the temperature for the water. Photograph of a paper towel dispenser in the Senior sanitary area photograph of lunchboxes in the fridge.

### Summary Comment

Based on the assurances provided from the registered provider, it is deemed that the requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The planned works on the linoleum flooring will be assessed on the next inspection.

## 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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced through discussion with the staff and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises and were out of the reach of the children.