

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD046
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Stars
-------------------------	--------------

Address of Service:	Moonvoy Valley, Tramore, Co. Waterford
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	X91 X2XY
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Edel McDonagh
-------------------------------------	---------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	12/09/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	72	PM	27
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan. & A. Mc Namara.
----------------------------------	--------------------------

Title:	Early Years Inspectors
---------------	------------------------

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 Stars is a privately owned full day-care childcare service. The service is located on the outskirts of the seaside town of Tramore. The premises is purpose built and has five childcare rooms, a kitchen and kitchenette area, two sleep rooms, nappy changing area, toilet and a utility room. The service operates between 08:00hrs and 18:00hrs Monday to Friday for children aged 6 months to 5 years of age. A school age service is also available.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner manager and works as part of the staff compliment if required. The service employs a manager and 19 childcare staff.

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 focused on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation 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

(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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider and named person who was able to deputise were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)
The staff files of 19 employees were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(a)(b) There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff member's file.

(c) There were Garda vetting disclosures available for all 19 staff working in the service. Of these 8 Garda vetting disclosures had not been re-vetted in the last 3 years in accordance with the Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 issued by the Tusla inspectorate as reported under Regulation 23.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were not required as none of the employees had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5, 6 or 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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. 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.

Compliance Information

(1)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service, and ratios were maintained in excess of the recommended requirements for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)
On the morning of the inspection there were 72 pre-school children directly supervised by 18 staff. The manager and registered provider was available to help out as required.

In the Baby room there were 7 children aged 1 to 2 years of age and they were directly cared for by 3 staff members.

In the Toddler room there were 16 children, aged 2 to 3 years, and were directly cared for by 3 staff members.
 In the Dragon Fly room there were 16 children aged 2.8 to 3 years of age, directly cared for by 3 staff members.
 In the Busy Bees room there were 18 children aged 3 to 4 years of age, directly cared for by 3 staff members.
 In the Bumble Bee room there were 15 children aged 2.10 to 5 years of age, directly cared for by 3 staff members.

In the afternoon of the inspection there were 27 pre-school children directly supervised by staff 8 members. The manager and registered provider was available to help out as required.

The numbers were as follows:

In the Baby room there were 2 children aged 1 to 2 years and they were directly cared for by 2 staff members.
 In the Toddler room there were children, aged to 2 to 3 years, and were directly cared for by 3 staff members.
 In the Dragonfly room there were 15 children aged 3 to 5 years of age directly cared for by 3 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,

Compliance Information

1)(a) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to meeting children's needs in the service. On the day of the inspection, there were five rooms in use for the care of preschool children. The ground floor had two childcare rooms, the toddler room and the baby room while the first floor accommodated three pre-school rooms for children aged between 3 and 5 years of age. It was documented in the service's mission statement that the aim of the service was to provide a caring welcoming environment for families and children. The manager informed the inspector that the programme was play based with elements of Montessori teaching methods incorporated into the ECCE curriculum.

All rooms were carefully planned and zoned to provide easy access to the well-resourced toy environments provided. Each room was set out to accommodate the needs of staff and the age range of children being cared for. The play equipment and furniture were of high quality and the resources supported different types of play

and offered different levels of complexity to provide challenge and encourage skills development. The baby room had large soft foam matting in a section of the room with foam shapes and wedges to support children's gross motor development. The staff in this room were observed sitting on the floor and supporting the babies playing with stacking rings and manipulative play items while being attentive to their safety. This room had an adjacent milk kitchen and a small sleep room. Care was child led, highchairs were arranged in a separate cordoned off area and babies were given the food provided by parents in accordance with their individual routines. Sleep times were observed to follow the babies sleeping routine and babies were observed being put down to sleep in accordance with their needs.

All toddler's rest needs were met during a planned sleeping period in the afternoon after lunch when stackable beds were set up in their room. Children were observed to have adjusted to this routine effortlessly settling down easily, staff members stayed in the rooms for the duration of this rest period. All children downstairs were observed to have easy and regular access to the newly refurbished outdoor space that had been totally refitted and re-designed with a new astroturf surface over the summer months.

The pre-school rooms upstairs busy bee, bumble bee and dragon fly rooms were well-resourced with high quality wooden toys and furniture. Areas of interest were well zoned such as, home corners, messy play areas and construction stations. Chill out areas had soft couches, cushions and colourful matting which were appropriately arranged into the recess of the roof. After lunch three children rested in a separate room off the dragonfly room, a staff member remained with them for the duration of their rest. There was a flexible structured arrangement in place for use of the two outdoor play spaces that were within different aspects of the premises.

The large play area off the south facing side of the creche and was totally resurfaced with markings for outdoor games such as snakes and ladders and hopscotch since the last inspection. This area supported a covered space called the shop corner children were observed at imaginative play here and away from the direct sunlight. There was a large selection and array of ride on toys observed and available to the children.

The service had a sensory room that gave access on to a second outdoor play space called a sensory garden on the north side of the building. The area was surfaced with synthetic grass and bark mulch. An assortment of sensorial opportunities was available such as, water play, sand play, a digging area and mud kitchen.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A sample of four completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under sections (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3)

(c) Completed registration forms were held on the premises and were available for inspection by an authorised person.

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:

Garda vetting was available for all 19 staff working in the service, and 11 Garda vetting disclosures had been re-vetted in the last 3 years. The remaining 8 of the Garda vetting disclosures had not been re-vetted in the last 3 years in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 issued by the Tusla inspectorate on the renewal of Garda vetting. It is acknowledged that the registered provider was aware of this requirement and had sent all 8 Garda vetting for renewal, of which 6 of these were out by 3 months.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response that on the day of the inspection almost all staff had been re-vetted in the last 3 years.

Supporting documentation submitted

Three Garda vetting renewal disclosure were submitted on the 2 October from the registered provider with additional evidence that a further five Garda vetting renewal disclosure were in process.

Summary Comment

The registerer providers response is satisfactory and Garda vetting renewal disclosures that are outstanding for the last 36 months in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12. will be reviewed 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)
Six staff employed to work in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained, and a further three staff were booked onto a FAR training course for November 2024.

(2)
(a) There were first aid boxes in all the childcare rooms. and in the kitchen

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 monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 23 August 2024.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Firefighting equipment was serviced annually, most recently on 29 August 2024 and the smoke alarm system was service on 29 August 2024.

(4)
Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the main entrance lobby and in each childcare room throughout the premises.