

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH082		
Name of Service:	Giggles Pre-School & Childcare CLG		
Address of Service:	The Arches, Donore, Streamstown, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 CK77		
Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Lynam		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM 43
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Unit, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. A school aged childcare facility is provided. The service is operated by an independent provider. Children attending the ECCE service avail of an exclusively outdoor experience.

The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built extension to the home of the registered provider. One large pre-school room and two sleep rooms are provided. In the outdoor area a standalone industry grade kitchen, three classroom areas and an office are provided. Extensive outdoor play areas are attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is rural in its location outside the village of Streamstown, County Westmeath.

Staffing

Ten childcare practitioners were present and working directly with the children. The registered provider was present throughout the inspection. The cook and the administrator for the service performed dual function roles as both held qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. Two students on work placement were present.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 co-operation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

(1)
In February and September 2022, a change of circumstance was submitted relating to a proposed change to the maximum registered capacity for the service and a change to the legal name of the service. These changes in circumstance were approved by the TUSLA registration office.

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.

(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 and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider and the named person to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection.

Seventeen files including two students were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members and students.

- (b)
The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members and students.
- (c)
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and students.
- (d)
No staff member or student had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (3)
The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of staff in the service.
- (4)
All staff members held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were fifty-nine children attending the service being supervised directly by ten adults at the time of inspection.

(8)(a)

The roster showed that two adults were present on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Information relating to regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g) was available in the parent handbook.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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

(1)(a)

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. The service provided the meals and snacks for the children depending on the length of stay in the service.

The mid-morning snack consisting of a variety of fresh fruit with a hot snack served at 12:30. The main meal was served in the afternoon and consisted of a beef mince stew with potatoes and vegetables. Potable water was available to the children to self-serve. Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during snacks and meals.

Children used the toilet independently and regular hand washing was observed. The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities.

The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection. Children were offered choices of what activities they wished to participate in. For the younger children accommodated in the main building, regular nappy changes were carried out. Sleep was facilitated on a need's basis adhering to the individual routines of each child.

Low level tables, chairs and low-level shelving with equipment were available to all children in the main building and in the outdoor classroom areas. The outdoor areas were laid out with interest areas with play equipment and materials accessible to the children. A "willow hut" provided a natural resource for imaginative play in the outdoor area. To the rear of the outdoor area smaller separately themed sheltered areas are provided for "construction", "garage/ transport" and "music" each area equipped with a range of diverse and developmentally appropriate equipment and play materials. In separate sheltered areas a "siopa", "farm" and "quiet corner" are also provided. Free standing art easels, sand and water trays are provided. Various slide, swing and balance activity units were provided. A variety of bikes, trikes and outdoor toys were available.

A tunnel, tyres and balance beams were available. A separate “messy play “area equipped with real materials including a cooker, food processor, sink, pots, pans and utensils are all available to the children. Individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. All children were observed to play outdoors. The service operated in partnership with parents. Learning journals for the children were in place and shared with parent at intervals throughout the year. A verbal handover on the child’s day was given to the parents at collection time.

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:

The main entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector completed the visitor log on arrival.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm running water, liquid soap and hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Openable windows or mechanical ventilation was provided in the sanitary accommodation.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Sleeping children were physically checked every ten minutes by a staff member.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school rooms. Fire assembly points were noted to the front and rear of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider confirmed that outings are undertaken from the service. A policy to support the practice and associated documents were in place.

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)

Five staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and rostered to be available on the premises.

(2)(a)

First aid boxes were available in accessible and conspicuous locations both indoors and outdoors.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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 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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 26 October 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms were serviced in April 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.