

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW114
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Name of Service:	Little Feet Creche & Pre-School Limited
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Address of Service:	33 Parkmore, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 NX56
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jacqueline Furlong-Kenny
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/08/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and S. Early O'Brien
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

N/A

Description of service

Little Feet Creche and Pre-school is a privately owned service that was first established in 1995. This full-time day service offers care and education to pre-school children aged one to six years of age. The service opens from 08:00hrs – 18:00 hrs Monday to Friday (including a sessional Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE) service from 09.00 hrs to 12.00 hrs for 38 weeks of the year).

A school age service is also provided. The service operates from an adapted two storey semi-detached house on the outskirts of Baltinglass Co. Wicklow. There are four pre-school rooms, two dedicated sleep rooms, a staff room and a large outdoor facility to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs ten adults in the service. Eight members of staff were present when the inspectors arrived on the premises. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection.

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/ 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 inspectors wish 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.

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the person in charge and examination of the staff roster it was confirmed that there are ten adults employed in the service to work directly with the children, including the registered provider. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available for eleven adults working in the service.

(c)

The required Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of eleven adults.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no one adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

The eleven adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed 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.

(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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. There were eight adults employed and present with 26 children on the day.

(8)(a)
There were two adults on the premises at all times.

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 door to the premises was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in each pre-school room was free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- Each care room had access to a separate sanitary area within the pre-school. There were adequate nappy changing facilities for the number of children attending the service in nappies.
- There was warm running water at 38.6°C, liquid soap and paper towels available in all sanitary and nappy changing areas.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all pre-school rooms and the nappy changing areas.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children before snacks and after using the toilet.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in all pre-school rooms.

Safe Sleep:

The sleep needs of the children in the age group one to two years of age were child led but there was also a designated time for sleep after lunch. The children slept in one of the two sleep rooms in the service. The service had an adequate number of cots to accommodate the age profile of the children who required cots for safe sleep and low-level beds to accommodate the children who no longer slept in cots.

All children were offered the opportunity to sleep during the day. All shoes and heavy clothing were removed before children were put into their cots. Each care room had a cosy area for children to use who did not sleep during their day. Sleeping children's breathing, colour and position, were recorded and charted at 10-minute intervals in addition to the room temperature.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

On the day of inspection, a staff member was observed carrying out a nappy change. The correct nappy changing procedure was located on the wall in the changing area.

The adult failed to wash their hands before applying their gloves at the start of the nappy change, failed to remove their gloves before applying cream to the child and re-clothing them and failed to wash the child's hands before returning them to their care room.

Strict care practices around nappy changing procedures are essential for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider has undertaken staff training with all staff to refresh understanding of the services policy and procedures in relation to nappy changing. The nappy changing policy has been updated and the procedure placed on the wall in the nappy changing area. Staff have been supervised in nappy changing to ensure they are completing the process correctly and they will continue to be monitored monthly by the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

The registered provider has submitted an updated copy of the services nappy changing policy, updated nappy changing procedure and a signed staff copy of training on this practice.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address the non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The person in charge ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

The person in charge ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.

(b)

The person in charge had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school.

(4)

The person in charge was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it relates.

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)

The person in charge was trained in FAR (First Aid Response) and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within each pre-school room and in the kitchen of the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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 evidence of regular fire drills taking place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 14th of July 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated October 2024.

(2)(c)

These records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the pre-school rooms and in other areas located around the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the day of inspection, the person in charge was able to demonstrate that there was an adequate number of adults present in the pre-school to ensure that the children attending were supervised continually during their day.