

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WW180		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Acorns Playschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Bridget's Hall, Woolgreen, Carnew, Co. Wicklow		
<b>Eircode:</b>	Y14 X953		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eileen Norris		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/06/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Bourke		
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Acorns Playschool was first established in 2001. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age on a sessional basis. The playschool is located in the community centre in Carnew, Co. Wicklow. The registered provider operates the service from 09.15am-12.15pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operate a sessional service for 38 weeks of the year. This service also operates a school aged childcare facility.

### Staffing

There are currently seven staff members employed in the playschool, this includes two CE workers. The registered provider also works in the service and was present on the day of 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/ 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 wished to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

### Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the registered provider, and reviewing the staff roster, it was confirmed that there were five staff members working in the service and two CE workers. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of the five staff members.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of seven adults.

(d)

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

(4)

The five members of staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A)

One staff member was employed pursuant to the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were not available in respect of the two staff members.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

I have received and validated references for the two people involved and will make sure there are validated references on file for all staff members.

### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate that validated references had been acquired.

## Summary Comment

The non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) have been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

### 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)  
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were five adults employed and present with eighteen children on the day of inspection.

(8)(c)  
There were two adults on the premises at all times. The registered provider does not operate the service singlehandedly.

### 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.*

*(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing of the above list of particulars, was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The registered provider ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

(5)  
The registered provider demonstrated that the records were kept for two years from the date on which the child first attended the pre-school service.

## 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:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(h)  
There were details of attendance for each child to the playschool recorded on a daily basis.

(i)  
There were records available to demonstrate the staff roster on a daily basis.

(3)  
The record referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)  
There were no Curriculum Vitaes available for three staff members on the day of inspection.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)  
I have gotten three written c.v.'s for the people involved. I will make sure there is a c.v. in all staff files

## Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Photographic evidence was sent in with the CAPA response of three staff C.V.'s

## Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 16 (1)(a) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

## 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-*

*(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)(b)

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service, with minor problems handled promptly. One to one attention was given to a child if it was required.

The atmosphere in playschool was observed to be calm and relaxed with the children allowed to pursue whatever toys or games they wished to play with in the craft/playroom and were supported in their choices.

Adults sat with the children during snack time. The snack time was relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as adults engaged with them helping when required.

Children were addressed by their name; their food was served on individual plates and the children were given plenty of time to eat their food. All food was provided by the parents of the children and reflected the healthy eating policy of the service. Snacks provided consisted of sandwiches with healthy fillings, fresh fruit pieces, all of which were cut into small pieces for safety, yogurts, cheese and crackers and all children had access for fresh water throughout their day.

There was a cosy area within the room for the children to use should they require it.

The children have access to an outdoor area on a daily basis. The outdoor area was suitable, safe and secure.

### 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 playgroup was securely locked on arrival of the inspector to the service.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All toys were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- The care room had direct access to the outdoor area, that was suitable.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in the service room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

##### Infection Control:

- There was a separate sanitary area available to the children. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels available.
- A foot pedal bin was available in the sanitary area for the safe disposal of used paper towels.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- Hand washing by adults and children was observed before snacks, after using the toilet and outdoor play.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the care room.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Infection Control:

1. The pre-school service does provide nappy changing facilities should a child require it, but they have no nappy changing procedure for the service. A robust nappy changing procedure is essential for effective infection control within a service.
2. The toilet seat in the disabled toilet facility was broken and the children using the toilet had to hold directly on to the toilet bowl. This is inadequate for infection control purposes.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Infection Control:

1. I have done a nappy changing policy I will review this policy every year.
2. I have replaced the broken toilet seat. If this happens again the toilet seat will be replaced immediately

## Supporting documentation submitted

### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was supplied with the CAPA response in relation to the non-compliances 1 & 2 found on the day of inspection.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliances found under Regulation 23 Infection control points 1 & 2 have been addressed and will be reviewed 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.*
- (2) *Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*
- (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 registered provider ensured that all children attending the service were checked in and out on the service register.
- (3)(a)(i-iv)
- The registered provider ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the service.
- (b)
- The registered provider had a record in writing, in the form of a visitors' book, of all such persons who accessed the service.
- (4)
- The registered provider was able to demonstrate that the visitors book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it related

## 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)
- All staff members had training in FAR first aid for children and were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)

A well-equipped first aid box was easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playschool room.

(b)

The first aid box was always available to the children attending the 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.*

*(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 that regular fire drills had taken place in the premises. The last fire drill took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.

(b)

There was a record in writing of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated August 2023 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2024 respectively.

(2)(c)

The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection on the premises, by an authorised person.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire were clearly displayed in the playschool room.