

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW255
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Name of Service:	Little Explorers Childcare
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Address of Service:	12 Mount Kennedy Town Centre, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 F840
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gina McGarry
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	55
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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 E. Mulhern
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
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Description of service

Little Explorers Childcare was established in September 2014. It is a privately owned service which is registered to provide care and education for children, on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis. It caters for children aged between zero and six years of age. The service is in a purpose-built building located in the village of Newtownmountkennedy in Co. Wicklow. The service has a total of five care rooms, two on the bottom floor of the premises and three on the top floor. In addition to the sleep area in the baby room, there is a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen, a laundry area, a staff room and an office. There is a designated outdoor play area at the rear of the premises. The service operates between the hours of 7.00 am and 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

There are a total of twenty-six adults employed in the service and there were twenty adults present on the day of inspection. This included three Managers, one area Manager and the full-time chef.

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 area manager, managers, 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 Manager it was confirmed that 26 adults are employed in the service and 20 staff were present on the day. All staff files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The Manager works in the service and has a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

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

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of twenty-six adults.

(c)

Completed three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for twenty-six adults employed.

(d)

International police vetting was available for thirteen adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-four staff members 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)
There were nineteen adults employed and present with 61 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)
There were more than two adults present on the premises throughout the inspection and the staff roster confirmed there were at least two adults present at all times.

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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The Manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

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

(4)

The Manager had evidence that all children's records were kept for a period of two years from the time a child left 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;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters 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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(g)(h)(i)(j) & (k)

The Manager made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The Manager ensured that the above list of information in paragraph (1) was open to inspection, within the service, to 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.

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 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.
- A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous place in each pre-school room and around the pre-school.
- The side gate that leads to the outdoor area behind the service was securely locked to prevent the unauthorised persons gaining access to the service and children leaving the service unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Each pre-school 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 each sanitary area 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.

Administration of Medication:

While it was not observed on the day of inspection, records showed that parental consent had been obtained for the administration of medication. The recording of medications given to children by the staff in the service was also available for inspection, this was in line with the policy of the service.

Safe Sleep:

There was written evidence that staff recorded, at 10-minute intervals, the position, colour and breathing of children who were sleeping, in addition to recording the room temperature. This practice was observed during the inspection.

Cots were well spaced at 50cms apart and all cots had waterproof mattresses. 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.

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 Manager ensured that all children attending the childcare service were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

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

(b)

The Manager had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the childcare service.

(4)

The Manager 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)

There were staff members trained in FAR first aid 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.

(b)

A 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 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 of regular fire drills haven taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 28th of August 2024.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises dated December 2023.

(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 all care rooms.