

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015WX070 | | |
| Name of Service: | Little Acorns Playschool | | |
| Address of Service: | Family Resource Centre, Kilmuckridge, Gorey, Co. Wexford | | |
| Eircode: | Y25 W1W9 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Mary Byrne | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 16/10/2024 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 7 | PM NA |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspector Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford. | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | C. Ryan | | |
| 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 | | |

Description of service

Little Acorns Playschool is a community preschool service under the management of a voluntary committee. The service offers a play-based curriculum to children and operates Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge and works daily with the children attending the service. The staff working directly with the children in the service hold qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 and above.

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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and Recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,
Regulation 21 Equipment and materials,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire Safety and Regulation 28 Insurance.

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 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

(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)(b)

There was a designated person in charge on the premises and a second named adult to deputise as required.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated references were kept the individual's file for two staff.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years

(4)

Certificate of qualifications for all staff who work directly with the preschool children were available on file.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Validated references were not available on file for one staff member.

(d)

Police vetting was not available on file for staff that had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

Staff are in the process of updating references and police vetting has been applied for. We will ensure all vetting and references are in place going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with children ensuring that the correct adult to child ratios were maintained at all times. During the morning there were seven children being directly cared for by two staff.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service consists of two playrooms and a kitchen. The three rooms are interconnected and well equipped and furnished with a variety of furniture, toys and materials. There were child sized tables and chairs suitable for tabletop activities and snack time. The rooms had sufficient space for children and staff with the larger front room spacious enough for dancing and children's yoga.

There were low level shelves with boxes of toys and materials. Children enjoyed free play, dancing and snack time. Children enjoyed imaginative free play with large blocks and waffle connectors. Toys and equipment included a kitchen, arts and craft materials and Montessori work. Pictures of the local community and the children's birthdays were displayed. Children were currently enjoying making Halloween themed arts and crafts and the had decorated the playroom for Halloween.

The outside play area consisted of an enclosed garden environment, with soft all-weather surfaces and grassy areas. There was a covered area with sandpits, a slide, ride on toys, balance toys, chalk walks and climbing 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 entrance to the premises was secured. The outdoors areas were fully enclosed. Accident and incident reports reviewed were maintained in line with the service policy.

Infection Control:

There was warm water, liquid hand soap and hand towels available in the toilets for hand washing. Good hand hygiene practices were observed on the day. The rooms were cleaned and well maintained.

Lunch boxes that included perishable food items were stored in the fridges in line with Safe Food Guidance.

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 trained in FAR and first aid for children available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position and was available for use.

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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 10 September 2024.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm were serviced in May 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.