

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX076
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Name of Service:	Little Lambs Creche and Montessori
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Address of Service:	49 Ardmore, Carnew Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y25 A254
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Regan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/11/2023
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Date of regulatory compliance meeting	9 February 2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
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Inspection undertaken by:	L. O' Connor
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 Lambs Creche and Montessori is a pre-school service providing full day, part-time and sessional care for children aged 2-6 years, and provides the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.

The premises is located within a residential area in the outskirts of Gorey. The service consists of five care rooms between two buildings. The Toddler room (2-3 years) and downstairs ECCE room (3-4 years) is located on the ground floor and the upstairs ECCE room is located on the first floor of the main building. A cabin which is adjacent to the building caters for an ECCE group attending on a sessional basis. There is an enclosed outdoor area located at back of the premises which is directly accessible from the main building and cabin. The service caters for school age children also.

Staffing

The service employs seven adults, including the registered provider who works directly with the pre-school children.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (1),(2), (4), Regulation 11 -Staffing (1), (2), Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h),(i),(k), Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child (1)(b), Regulation 25 - First Aid, Regulation 26 - Fire Safety Measures(1)(a),(b), and Regulation 28; Insurance.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, and Regulation 29 Premises (c). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the registered provider on the 29/11/2023 under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. A response was provided by the registered provider on the 29/11/2023.

A referral was made to the fire officer on 01/12/2023 regarding fire safety measures in place within the cabin.

A Regulatory Compliance meeting was held with the registered provider on 09/02/2024 due to the outstanding non-compliance under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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) The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection. From a review of the staff sign in records and staff rosters, the designated person in charge was on premises for the opening hours of the service.

(2) Seven staff files were reviewed, and the following was available;

(a),(b) Thirteen references from a previous employer and one reference was available from reputable source.

The references were validated as required.

(c) Garda Vetting was in place and available for review for the seven adults working directly with the children.

(d) Police vetting which was required for two locations was available for review.

(4) The seven staff working directly with the pre-school children had at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)

There were six adults working directly with twenty-four children on the day of inspection. during the morning of inspection, the following was in place;

- There were five children aged 2-3 years in the Toddler room with one adult.
- There were eight children aged 3-4 years in the downstairs ECCE room with two adults.
- There were five children aged 3-5 years in the upstairs ECCE room with two adults.
- There were six children aged 3-5 years in the Cabin with one adult.

At 2.30pm, there were nine pre-school children aged 2-5 years in the downstairs ECCE room with two adults and two additional adults available.

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:

- (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;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The service maintained accurate records of attendance which were observed to be updated as children arrived and departed the service.
 - (i) Staff rosters were on display within the service, and it was reflective of the staff within the service and hours present within the service.
 - (k) The accident and incident records were reviewed. Each record reviewed was fully completed to include the date, full name of the child, relevant details, staff signature and parent / guardian signature.

Non-Compliance Information

- (g) The services administration of medication policy did not specify the service procedure for a child with emergency medication, to include the development of a care plan.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The services medication policy was updated, the staff read it and signed it. All staff made aware of the amendments made to the policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated administration of medication policy

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement for Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service has been met.

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

(b) The following was observed during the duration of the inspection;

Dinner and snack times were relaxed and at the pace of the child. For morning snack, the children were provided with a yogurt, banana, apple, and orange segments. During this time, the children in the upstairs ECCE room were observed at the table having conversations with their peers and the two staff members present. The children were overheard discussing the flavour of the yogurt between their peers with staff joining the conversation. In the toddler room during snack time, a child asked the adult 'can I open my yogurt', the adult responded positively to recognise the child's request. The child peeled the lid off, held it up the air to show the adult, and the adult recognised their achievement. This practice of supporting mealtimes to be at the child's pace supports their learning and development.

Children attending on a full day care basis eat their dinner in the kitchen area as one group. The mealtime was unhurried and calm, and the children were observed to have conversations with their peers before the dinner was provided. On the day, children were provided with a homecooked meal of chicken, broccoli, carrots and rice with pesto. The adults were aware of children's food preferences and provided some children with plain rice. One child stated they did not like rice, and the adult responded playfully 'will I make you your special pasta?'. The child smiled and nodded their head. This child was provided with pasta, vegetables and chicken. The children were observed to eat independently using the forks provided, and where required, staff supported and encouraged the children.

Children's choice was respected throughout the inspection in each of the care rooms. the adults recognised children's cues and signals. For example, at dinnertime, there were two children in the Toddler room, the adult was overheard to ask the children will we eat dinner in the kitchen or in here today? One child who was unsettled during the morning and responded 'here' and the other child repeated the word 'here'.

The adult responded positively ‘we will eat our dinner here today then’. This practice recognises the child’s choice and their individual needs.

Children’s play choices were recognised and supported by the adults. In the cabin, the children asked the adult if they could all dance. The adult responded ‘yes, let’s go down here’. There was one child sitting at the table playing with pretend food. The adult invited the child to dance, and reassured the child ‘you don’t have to dance if you don’t want to, you can stay at the table if you like?’ The child smiled at the adult and remained at the table playing. These practices recognise the child as an individual and supports their well-being.

Outdoor play was encouraged by service through appropriate clothing and a diverse outdoor environment. All the children within the service were observed to engage with outdoor play, despite cooler temperatures on the day. The adults explained parents provide all-weather clothing which includes waterproof trousers, jackets, hats and wellie boots. The children engaged in extended periods of play in the outdoors throughout the inspection. The outdoor area provided children with a range of learning opportunities through areas of interest including a mud kitchen, car area, book corner, sand play, and playhouse. Children were provided with a range of equipment including bikes, trikes and cars to support the varying ages and stages of development. Children were provided with opportunities for risky play through challenging themselves with slanty surfaces, heights including stepping tree trunks, and climbing opportunities. The adults remained at a distance to facilitate the children’s play, and when required, were fully engaged with the children to provide support with problem solving or extend their learning.

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

Fire Safety:

Records were available to demonstrate fire drills occur on a monthly basis. Staff described the routes to taken in the event of an emergency which was consistent with the evacuation procedures on display.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Hazardous equipment was accessible to the pre-school children in the cabin. The following was observed;
 - a. Hand sanitizer was within reach on a low-level shelf in the care room.
 - b. Cleaning products were accessible in an unlocked press in the sanitary area.

Infection Control:

2. Items were stored within the sanitary area which posed a risk of the spread of infection.
 - a. Low level beds were stored within the Toddler sanitary area.
 - b. Soft play blocks, a mop and sweeping brush were stored in the sanitary area of the cabin.
3. Children's hands were not consistently washed. For example, returning indoors from outdoor play and before dinnertime.

Administration of Medication:

4. Appropriate measures were not in place for a child with emergency medication. The following was noted;
 - a. Consent to administer the emergency medication was in place, and the dosage of medication was stated in the child's enrolment form. However, a detailed care plan to specify the procedures to follow was not available.
 - b. It is acknowledged that emergency medication was available within the service. However, medication which was specified by the parent/ guardian to administer prior to the emergency medication was not available within the service.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 29/11/2023 and a response was provided on the same day.

Fire Safety:

5. A fire alarm system was not in place within the cabin. This may impede the safe evacuation in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged the registered provider has attempted to get works completed. A referral was made to the fire officer.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.
 - a. The hand sanitizer was removed from the low shelf on the 29/11/2023, and all staff were told that sanitizer should not be accessible to the children.
 - b. The press in the sanitary area has been fitted with a child proof lock on the 30/11/2023. This was added to the classroom check list as well as explaining to the staff the importance of keeping this area clear.

Infection Control:

2.
 - a. On the day of the inspection the beds were removed from the sanitary area and are now stored upstairs. All staff have been informed and reminded to keep sanitary area clear.
 - b. On the day all extra equipment was removed from the sanitary area. all staff were reminded to keep sanitary area clear and this was added to the checklist.
3. All staff had to read the handwashing policy on their return to work and reminded the importance of hand hygiene. Hand washing is part of the daily routines and all staff are reminded to follow policies.

Administration of Medication:

4. a &b

The registered provider responded to the Immediate Action Notice on the evening of the inspection [29/22/2023]. The registered provider provided evidence of an updated care plan for the child for the parents to sign the following day, and the required medication. The registered provider outlined the services emergency medication plan was updated for the child, added to their file as well as kept in their care room. Once the care plan was updated all staff read and signed it

Fire Safety:

5. Following the Regulatory Compliance Meeting, the registered provider submitted the following;

The cabin will close on a temporary basis from this week and the service will move the children to the room 'upstairs classroom'. The service will get the works required by the fire officer carried out on the cabin. Since the meeting, the service was in contact with a company to carry out the works and are

awaiting a timeframe. The longer term goal is to replace the cabin with a permanent building and move the class back down to it.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Morning checklist template to include hazardous items are out of reach.

Infection Control:

Infection control policy which was signed by staff.

Administration of Medication:

Completed Care Plan for the child, photograph of required medication, letter for parent(s), care plan template(s) for a child with an allergy.

Fire Safety:

Letter from the Fire Officer.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has demonstrated actions to address and prevent their recurrence regarding general safety, infection control and administration of medication.

Fire safety:

As this room has been taken out of use while works are ongoing the registered provider has addressed the finding on an interim basis. The works regarding provision of a fire detection system in the cabin prior to it being brought back into use remain outstanding and will be assessed on the next inspection.

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) At least one person who had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children at all times.

(2) (a),(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available, and stored in an easily accessible location.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) Records were available to demonstrate the service carries out fire drills, and the most recent fire drill took place on 28/11/2023.

(b) The records demonstrated maintenance was carried out on the fire extinguishers in August 2023, and with the smoke alarms in the main building in September 2023.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was on display to demonstrate insurance was in place for the operational hours of the pre-school service and the number of children registered to attend the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The sanitary area available for children aged 3-5 years in the Cabin was not adequately heated. At 11.30am, the temperature within the area was 14.8°C.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service spoke with an electrician and are waiting a new heater to be fitted in the sanitary area. The service will add temperature monitoring on the morning checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Morning checklist template to include monitoring of temperatures.

Summary Comment

As this room has been taken out of use temporarily, this has been accepted as an appropriate interim action while works are planned.

The registered provider has provided assurances the work will be carried out, and it will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

(4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,

the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1), (2), (4)

The following table demonstrates the space available to the children within the service;

Name of the room	Space available	Age profile	Space requirement (Full Day Care)
Toddler Room (Downstairs)	17.13 m ²	2-3 years	Full day care; 2.35 square metres
Downstairs ECCE	23.28 m ²	3-6 years	Full day care; 2.3 square metres Sessional; 1.818 square metres
Upstairs ECCE (blue room)	19.41m ²	3-6 years	
Upstairs ECCE	11.54 m ²	3-6 years	
Cabin*	19.2 m ²	3-6 years	

*temporarily out of use while works are ongoing