

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CE004		
Name of Service:	Lifford Preschool and Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Thomond Lodge, The Green, Lifford Road, Lifford, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95T048		
Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Tuohy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	31/01/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy		
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

Lifford Preschool and Afterschool was established in 2016, in Ennis, County Clare as a sessional service for children ranging in age from two to six years, Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 for 38 weeks of the year. A school aged service is facilitated each afternoon from the building. This service operates from a single storey building. The children have access to four rooms, the Butterfly room, the Construction room, the Art and Creative room for play and learning activities and a dining room for mealtime. An outdoor play area is located at the side, rear and front of the service.

Staffing

On the 31st of January 2024, three adults worked directly with the fourteen children in attendance. The registered provider was not present during the inspection. The adults held qualifications at levels 5 and 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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. 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.

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,*

(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)

The manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager was available throughout the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available and reviewed by the inspector. The findings included the following:

(a)

Five validated references from past employers were available.

- (b)
Three validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the registered provider and three adults employed by the service.
- (d)
International police vetting was available for two adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at levels 5 and level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
On the 31st of January 2024 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.
- (3)
The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. Three adults worked directly with fourteen children during the inspection.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (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)
The service-maintained records for the twenty children enrolled in the service. The records included the required particulars outlined from (a) to (i).

(3)(a)(b)(c)

The children's registration forms were open to inspection in the service.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records referred to in paragraph (1) are retained for a period of two years after the children cease to attend the service.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff interacted in a kind manner with the children, responded to their individual needs promptly and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the session. Staff cared for the children in a sensitive manner and responded promptly to the children's cues for comfort. The staff supported the children to be independent in play, during toileting, caring for their personal belongings and in preparation for mealtime. The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions and the staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's individual preferences and capabilities. The children were supported in accordance with their preference on an individual level and as part of the group. Speech sound development was promoted by all the staff during conversations and through games played. The staff and children sat together during mealtime in the dining room, this was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments were bright, spacious and suitably resourced for the age range and developmental needs of the children in attendance. The children were observed to thoroughly enjoy the morning activities and freely move between the three care rooms in accordance with their individual preferences.

Upon the inspector's arrival to the service the children were engaged in open ended, play based tabletop and floor-based activities. These activities included imaginative, sensorial, manipulative, constructive and creative play. Prior to mealtime the children transitioned to the rest area in the Butterfly room where story time and discussions took place.

The three care rooms offered a large range of enriching experiences and resources and were laid out with low level shelving, tables and chairs that are accessible to the children. The areas of interest in the Butterfly room included: table and floor-based activities such as shape sorters, large and small jigsaws, balancing and constructive games using soft pretend bricks. Additional inviting area included: a dress up area, a home corner and shop corner with wooden materials, low unit with musical instruments an area with soft furnishings, an armchair and a bookshelf with a large range of reading materials. The Art and Craft room was laid out with designated interest areas that included a sand area with photographic illustrations overhead on various ideas for play, other areas included a mark making section, an easel stand with a blackboard and chalk, a painting area and sensory table with feathers. The containers in the shelving units were resourced with a large range of creative materials. The walls displayed visual learning aids for the children such as "Tell the Time", "Cloud spotting" and alphabetical posters. The construction room contained visual displays of various skilled trade worker and illustrations of transport vehicles. The low-level units contained activity sets, magnetic tiles, large and small building blocks, various transport vehicles. The children explored each room and were supported in play and learning in each area by a staff member.

An enclosed outdoor play area was located to the front, side and rear of the building offering a large space for the children to freely engage in physical, imaginative and creative play. The play area had a bark and tarmac surface. The areas of interest included a sand area, wooden activity units with swings and a slide, planters, a pretend playhouse, large wooden blocks, and outdoor seating. A shed was available to store the children's play equipment and materials.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

An informal communication approach was observed during interactions between staff and the children's parents. Parents conversed amicably with staff during the children's arrival and departure from the service. The children's daily activities and observations were shared with parents verbally and through a messaging system. The staff facilitated the programme of care and learning in a cohesive manner in each room. The children were consulted in advance of the changes in the programme of care and learning. A key person approach is adopted in the service. A

learning journal was available for each children demonstrating the children's activities and creative artwork. The journals are shared with the parents at the end of each term and opportunities to discuss the contents within between parents and children are promoted by staff.

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 service was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the premises.
- The outdoor area was secured with a gate, concrete walls and fencing to protect the children within.
- All the children were signed in on arrival and signed out on departure from the service.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. Completed cleaning schedules were available demonstrating the frequency and areas cleaned within the service.
- The nappy changing and sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the day.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. A policy and documentation were available in the event that medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- The service maintained records of fire drills.
- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exits routes were readily identified with signage.

Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are undertaken by the service. An outings policy was available to inform practice

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)

A member of staff had a record of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible positions throughout the service.

(b)

Two first aid boxes were available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on the 30th of January 2024.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively in October 2023 and January 2024.

(4)

Fire action notices were available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for children attending the service. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.