

# TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

## Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



**Tusla I.D:** TU2016LD003

**Name of Service:** Laugh and Learn Preschool/ Montessori

**Address of Service:** Mornine, Moydow, Co. Longford.

**Email Address:** preschoolcare@gmail.com

**Name of Registered Provider:** Gemma Flanagan

<b>Type of Proposed Service:</b>	<b>Sessional</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part-Time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Drop-In</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Full Day Care</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Childminding</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Temporary</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Proposed change:** Increase number of children cared for on a sessional basis from 16 to 19.  
Change in hours of operation from 08:30hrs-12md and 12:30hrs to 16:00hrs to 09:00hrs to 12:20hrs.

**Proposed Number of Children:** 19

**Registered change:** Change in number of children to be accommodated from 16 to 19.  
Change in hours of operation from 08:30-12:00 and 12:30-16:00 to 09:00 - 12:20

**Date of Inspection:** 1 5 0 8 2 0 2 3

**Inspection undertaken by:** A. Kennedy

**Title:** Early Years Inspectorate.

Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.

**Rationale for Inspection:**  
Change in Circumstance Application

**Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office**

**Registration Status:** Registered Sessional Service for 19 Children

**Date of Registration** 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023

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### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Description of Service</b>	Laugh and learn Preschool/Montessori is a sessional preschool service located in a rural area between the towns of Ballymahon and Edgeworthstown. The service is in operation since 2016 and is under the ownership of the registered provider. The service operates two sessions between the hours of 8.30am and 12.00md and 12:30hrs to 16:00hrs and offers the Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE). children in the age range 2 years and 6 months to 5 years.
<b>Premises</b>	The prefabricated unit is located at the back of a residence and comprises of a playroom, a store area and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor area is located directly outside of the service and parking is provided in front of the prefabricated unit and off the roadway.
<b>Staffing</b>	The service is staffed by 2 adults who have childcare qualifications at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6 and level 8.
	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under two themes: Governance, and Safety.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with the registered provider are documented in the inspection report and presented to the Registration Office for consideration of a decision in relation to the service receiving continued registration. 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.</p>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider who was 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.

**Requirement met:**

There will be a designated person in charge and a proposed named person available to deputise in the service.  
 (1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a second person who was able to deputise as required. Both adults were proposed to work directly with the children in the service.

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.  
 (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—  
 (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school 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.

**Requirement met:**

This requirement has been met.  
 (1) It is proposed that there will be an adequate number of staff working directly with the pre-school children.  
 It is proposed that there will be a maximum of 19 children at any one time with two staff, who hold at hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education.  
 It is proposed there will be an additional adult employed as a relief person in event of staff absence and this adult holds a level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education.  
 (8)(c) It is proposed that the registered provider will not operate the service single-handedly.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

**Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play**

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
  - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (2) A registered provider—
- (b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

**Requirement met:**

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a)

The design, organisation, and resourcing of the environment would be able to support each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.

The playroom was designed and arranged to

- maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter,
- divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support proposed children’s play, development, and learning,
- give all proposed children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development.

The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was thereby readily accessible to the proposed pre-school children.

The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.

Materials and items of interest included had a selection of play and work equipment which included a dolls house in a miniature world area, traffic lights, farm machinery and animals in an area provided with artificial grass and a roadway. Hairdryers, brushes and accessories were provided in a hairdresser’s station. A kitchen equipped with food, utensils and trolleys, a musical instrument area, doctors and fire men sets, and hats were located in a role play area. Stencils, stampers, cutting scissors,

colours and paints were provided in an art area and connecting and pouring toys, blocks of different sizes and dimensions, natural materials and pouring equipment in a practical life area. A sand box and puzzles, jigsaws and games for tabletop activities were on open display on low level shelving for easy access and retrieval by children. Low level tables and chairs were provided for children to sit at and engage in activities and play.

(b) A soft floor mat and books located on an open low level shelf unit was provided in a corner of the playroom for children to rest and opt out of activities.

(3)(a)

**Outdoor area**

The registered provider advised that the outdoor area was an extension of the indoor environment and linked with the learning that goes on inside. The playroom had direct access to the outdoor play area. The registered provider advised that the children would have the opportunity to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions.

The outdoor area was safely and securely fenced in by timber fencing on 3 site boundaries and a heavy-duty wire fence safely anchored to the ground on the remaining site boundary leading to the adjoining field. A smooth concreted area led to the entrance door of the prefabricated unit. A timber framed shelter covered with an open Perspex roof provided an area for shelter when children played outdoors during inclement weather conditions, an area for the storage of toys for outdoor play and an area to hang coats and bags when children arrived at the service. Play equipment on the grass surface included a mud kitchen and kitchen equipment, a water tray, a sand box, a digging area, a tree house with swings and a slide attached, a tepee, a wall mounted black board and mirrors and a raised flower bed. Children could view the adjoining fields and a hen shelter from the confines of the outdoor play area.

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## Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Requirement Met:

This requirement has been met.  
The refrigerator in the playroom provided suitable refrigerated storage for perishable foods and snacks as provided by parents and guardians of preschool children. A sink with a drinking water supply was available in the playroom.  
The service had a healthy eating policy.

### 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.*

#### Requirement Met:

This requirement has been met.

**General Safety.**

- The staff only areas, the office, and kitchenette, were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, that will be attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The electric heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing without risk of scalding the children, was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows were fitted with restrictive access devices / safety systems. Window blind cords had appropriately secured fasteners.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas. The service had a risk assessment system for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.</li> <li>• The registered provider clearly identified to the early years’ inspector the drop off and collection procedures for children.</li> <li>• There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of danger to the proposed pre-school children.</li> </ul> <p><b>Infection Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.</li> <li>• The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.</li> <li>• The registered provider advised that the outdoor play equipment would be cleaned prior to/ after a child’s use, with documented records maintained.</li> <li>• A refrigerator was provided in the kitchenette for the storage of perishable foods.</li> <li>• The playroom was observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.</li> <li>• The mechanical ventilation covers, in the sanitary area were kept in a clean condition.</li> </ul>
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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

**Requirement met**

The requirement has been met.

(1) Certification was available in the service which confirmed that both staff members had up to date first aid training with an expiry date of 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored on a high shelf in the preschool room.

(b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

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.

**Requirement met:**

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a) A recording system to maintain a record off monthly fire drills as conducted was displayed on the wall in the playroom.

(b) The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment which were wall mounted in the playroom confirmed that an annual service was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 and the maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that an annual service was conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in the playroom and the fire assembly point for the service was located on a timber gate in the outdoor play area.

Part VI – Safety

**Regulation 28 – Insurance**

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

**Requirement met:**

This requirement has been met.

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 22 children in daily attendance on a sessional basis. It was confirmed that the maximum number of children seeking approval for attendance in the service was 19 included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

**Regulation 29 – Premises**

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

**Requirement met:**

This requirement has been met.

- (a) The prefabricated unit was in a good state of repair and maintenance on the day of inspection with no evidence of dampness or mould growth on internal walls and ceilings. The open pathway leading to the entrance door and shelter outside of the service was provided with a smooth concrete finish.
- (b) The prefabricated unit and outdoor play area was safely and securely fenced in by timber fencing above child height to prevent unsupervised exit of children when outdoors. The service had the sole use of the prefabricated unit and outdoor play area. The service was connected to the mains water supply for drinking purposes and the septic tank drainage system was located in a field which was fenced off from the outdoor play area to deny children access to the drainage system. Windows and doors appeared to be both watertight and weather tight when closed.
- (c) The two openable windows in the playroom and six fluorescent light fittings which were covered with shatter proof diffusers ensured a good mix of natural and artificial lighting in the playroom and ventilation. Both the wall and ceiling mounted electric heaters in the playroom were positioned above child height.
- (d) The walls in the room in the service were brightly painted and clean on the day of inspection and the heavy-duty lino floor finish throughout the service was well fitted and maintained. Foot pedal operated bins were provided and it was acknowledged that waste and refuse was taken away daily from the service.
- (e) Two toilet cubicles and two wash handbasins which had a thermostatically controlled supply of hot and cold water were provided for the maximum of 19 children in daily attendance in the service. A separate staff toilet cubicle and wash handbasin with a hot and cold-water supply was provided in the newly erected wooden cabin for the staff working in the service. Liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins were provided adjacent to the wash handbasins and a lobby between the sanitary accommodation and the playroom was provided to ensure that the toilet areas did not open directly into the playroom. Wall vents operated from light switches were provided to ensure that both the children’s and staff sanitary accommodation was ventilated directly to the outside air.

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### 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.*
- (3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

#### Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

- (1) An area of 36.21m<sup>2</sup> provided adequate floor space for the proposed maximum of 19 children in daily attendance in the service.
- (3) A minimum of 1.81 square metres of clear floor space will be available for each child proposing to attend the sessional service.