

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LD003
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Name of Service:	Laugh and Learn Preschool/Montessori
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Address of Service:	Mornine, Moydow, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 R984
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gemma Flanagan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
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Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and S. Killeen
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Laugh and Learn Preschool and Montessori was established in 2016 as a privately run childcare service for pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years by the present registered provider.

The service provides sessional childcare and education to children from 9.00am to 12.00pm.

The service is located in a prefabricated premises to the rear of the registered providers family home. The care room is a spacious open plan area.

Staffing

Laugh and Learn Preschool and Montessori employs two childcare staff including the registered provider who works directly with the children. The adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 and safety. 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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

The files of two members were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of two adults employed.
- (b) Not applicable, as the references were from previous employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for two adults working in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Not applicable, as no adult had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) Two adults working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher 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.*
- (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) There were twelve children attending the service being supervised directly by two adults during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.

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 registered provider documented the inspectors' visit to the service in the visitor's book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time.

There was documentary evidence available that daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed weekly to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care room. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

The staff members supervised the children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Staff members were observed washing their hands during the morning. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Nappy changing facilities were available however all children attending were toilet trained on the day.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required safe practices when administering medication in the service. There were no children attending who required medication to be administered while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

A comfortable rest area was available to any child who wished to have a rest or take a break from activities for a while.

Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed. Fire drills were carried out and records maintained.

Outing:

The service conducts outings and an outings policy is in place.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On arrival at the service, the inspectors walked directly in to the care room as the entrance door was not secured to prevent unauthorised entry. It is acknowledged that the registered provider immediately corrected the non-compliance and secured the door.
2. Garda vetting was available for two staff members. However, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
3. The four vertical posts supporting the covered roof in the outdoor play space were not protected and could cause potential injury to a child if they ran in to them during play.
4. A tall storage unit with trays in the care room opposite the sink required to be anchored to the wall as it moved when checked. It could potentially tip over and cause injury to a child if they were in its vicinity.

Fire Safety:

5. The registered provider did not ensure that fire drills were completed monthly as the last recorded fire drill was 14 October 2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. This was corrected immediately the morning of the inspection. It was just an oversight that day. There is a hook beside the door where the keys hang. The door is immediately locked after anyone enters or leaves the building.
2. Registration on the Tusla portal as part of the application process has been completed - awaiting solicitor to sign the documents.
3. Foam mats have been attached the to the posts outside.
4. The unit has since been attached to the wall.

5. Fire Safety:

6. Fire drills are always carried out, but they were not documented. A further two drills have been carried out since the inspection and documented.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Document
2. Document
3. Photograph
4. Photograph

Fire Safety:

5. Document

Summary Comment

The written response, photographic and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider have been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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 registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) Staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care room.
 - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 14 October 2024.
- (b)
- A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was serviced February 2025, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 6 January 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2025. The insurance provided cover for 22 children.