

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LH005
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Name of Service:	Venessa's Little Legends
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Address of Service:	The Blackridge, Ardee, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 F2Y6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Venessa Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 80-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
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
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Description of service

Venessa's Little Legend's is located in a residential area in Co. Louth. The service is based in the registered provider's two-storey home. There is the Junior Preschool Room on the ground floor and the Senior Preschool room is on the first floor. The service is registered to provide sessional care to children aged 3-6 years old. There are two morning sessions and an afternoon session, however, the afternoon session is not currently in operation. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). There is an outdoor area on the premises, a kitchen area and sanitary facilities.

Staffing

The registered provider and three staff members work directly with the children. There is a staff member available to provide relief cover.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 15 Record of pre-school child, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and

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Development of Child, Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play and Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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 registered provider, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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,*

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(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 registered provider is also the person in charge and works in the service on a daily basis.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, and review of the staff attendance it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge was on the premises.

(c) On discussion with staff members there was a clearly defined person in charge to ensure lines of accountability.

(2) The recruitment files of the registered provider and four members were reviewed.

(a)(b) Ten written references, which were validated as required, were available for the registered provider and the four staff members.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure, dated within the last three years, was available for the four staff members and the registered provider.

(d) A review of the documentation available demonstrated that either police vetting was not required, or in the case of one staff member, it was available to review.

(4) There was documentation available to demonstrate that four staff members and the registered provider held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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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 day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) Upon the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- There were two staff members and 5 children aged between 3 to 6 years old in the Junior Preschool room.
- There were two staff members and 9 children aged between 3 to 6 years old in the Senior Preschool room.

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;*

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(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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service. A total sample of 6 child record forms were reviewed, to include children in attendance across both rooms, and included the required information as detailed at (1) (a) to (i) above.

(3) The records, as detailed above, were available to review on site in a secure location in 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, and

(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

Supporting relationships around children

The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care. Staff members spoke of supports in place for some of the children who required additional support. Staff were aware of individual goals and strategies required for support which were observed being implemented by staff members. This was supported by daily communication with parents as observed through the electronic application used by the

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service. Childrens' choice was facilitated, for example the children made play dough with the staff members in the Junior preschool room. Following the theme of Valentine's Day the children were asked what colours they wanted to make their play dough. Staff members also responded to children's play, for example a child and staff member discussed how they could make a halo in the playdough. The inspector observed that the children enjoyed their mealtime when both rooms came to eat together in the Junior preschool room and children happily chatted with their peers at this time.

Basic Needs

Children were also included within the daily routine of the service as children were given various jobs. Children were able to use the sanitary facilities on an independent basis and supported by staff as required. Tissues were readily available for the children, and they were reminded to wash their hands after using them

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 19 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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to a ground floor and first floor room. In these rooms there was space for tabletop and floor-based activities. The layout of the rooms accommodated children to play individually, in small groups and in a large group. For example, the inspector observed that whilst children played and ate there were sufficient chairs and space at these tables for the children attending. Some of the furniture in the room was easily moveable, therefore different spaces could be created.

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(b) The children attended the service on a sessional basis and were provided with a cosy area consisting of cushions and books.

(4) The children had access to an outdoor area directly from the ground floor care room. There was a secure gate to the side of the outdoor area, which was enclosed by a wall. There was grass area and children had access to climbing equipment, a slide and wooden bridge. There was also a paved area with scooters and ride on toys available. A mud kitchen and covered water play area were also accessible to the children outdoors.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a glass door and thumb lock system in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The stair gates were closed throughout the inspection unless the stairs were being used by children or staff.
- The stairs were well maintained and well lit.

Infection Control:

- Following indoor play, the children washed their hands prior to eating their lunch.
- Children's lunches, which contained perishable items, were stored in the fridge and removed by the children when they were ready to eat.
- Tissues were readily available for children. Hand washing and sanitisation were observed following the use of tissues.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider had no recent medication administration records. However following the previous inspection, they discussed the procedure for the administration of medication and the witnessing of the administration by another staff member. This could then be stored on the electronic application and sent to parents.