

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:	11/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney
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 Legends is a childcare facility in operation since 2016. The service is privately run, located in Ardee town, Co. Louth. The service provides a sessional education and care to pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years and school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 09:30am to 12:30 hrs Monday to Friday and caters for a maximum of 20 children. The service operates from the registered provider's own home. The premises consists of one room on ground floor level and a second room on the first-floor level. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the pre-school. The afternoon session is presently not in operation.

Staffing

The registered provider and three staff members work 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. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The scope of the inspection included both rooms in operation.

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

A referral was sent to the Fire Authority in Louth County Council to assess if the pre-school service is compliant with fire safety legislation. The lock on the emergency door leading into the pre-school service was not easily and readily openable.

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,

(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 was the designated person in charge. An adult was available to deputise as required.

(b) Staff rosters and staff sign in records were available for inspection and indicated that the person-in-charge is on the premises during the hours of operation of the service.

(c) Staff members were aware of the management structure in the service, the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) Four staff files were reviewed.

(a) Three written past employer references were available and validated.

(b) In the absence of past employer references, 4 references from a source other than an employer were available

(c) Four staff files reviewed had the required garda vetting documents available for inspection.

(d) Police Vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for more than 6 months.

(4) Four staff members providing direct care to pre-school children had documentation to demonstrate they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National 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) There were four adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection, including 1 staff member employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). The children were attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult: child ratio was satisfactory.
- (2)
- Junior Pre-school Room: There were 5 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff and 1 AIM staff member.
 - Senior Pre-school Room: There were 9 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

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-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Twelve children's enrolment records were inspected and contained particulars as specified by Regulation 15 (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) except as outlined below.

(3)(c) The children's enrolments records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- Two records did not contain information in relation to the child's GP that may be necessary in the event of an emergency.
 - Two records did not contain the parents' signature for permission for emergency medical care in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The service has reinstated written enrolment forms ensuring every parent has signed and given details regarding their child's GP.

Staff have discussed the importance of filling in the enrolment forms with all parents and have created a new document with policies and procedures relating to emergencies, first aid, critical incident plan, etc. explained these to parents and have a signed sheet to say that they have read, understood and are aware of our procedures and are given consent for life saving measures.

Preventive Action

In future all forms must be submitted online prior to commencing preschool.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. The registered provider has given assurance that information as required by Regulation 15(a-i) will be completed in respect of each child attending the pre-school. Regulation 15 has been addressed.

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

- The service promoted healthy eating, food and snacks were provided by the parents/guardians and consisted of small sandwiches, fruit and vegetable pieces. Children's drinks were available within their reach which they could access as they wished.
- The staff members were overall responsive to the children's individual needs, children who required additional attention to complete activities or who required comfort were responded to.
- Children were facilitated to move freely in the care room to engage in play material of their choice.
- The children were encouraged to be independent, suitable to their age and stage of development. Assistance was given as required.

Supporting Relationships

- Overall staff members were observed to respond promptly to the verbal and non-verbal cues of each child. They were observed being kind and respectful to all children and addressed each child appropriately.
- A sense of identity and belonging for the children attending the service were observed. There was a family and birthday wall on display where children could refer to during the sessional service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment available for the children. The pre-school room had a range of play-based materials and that offered stimulation, exploration, and imaginative play. The play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play, and movement.
- Play material included farm animals, small world areas, play kitchen with support material, activity /manipulation toys, dolls and prams, and arts and crafts.
- A range of books were available in the cozy reading areas which supported children’s language and development.
- The pre-school room was decorated with the children’s artwork.
- The grass and stone surfaced outdoor space allowed the children to engage in running and free play. Materials included a sand and water area, planting area, see saw and a messy kitchen area.

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 door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Accidents and incidents were recorded and documented appropriately.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and cloth hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, following personal care and following outdoor play.
- The standard of cleaning throughout the pre-school was satisfactory. There was evidence that daily cleaning schedules were carried out.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A safety gate located at the top of the stairs was held open by a door stopper. There was a risk that a young child could sustain an injury when the safety gate was left open. Seven children were present in the pre-school room adjacent to the stairs on the day of inspection.

Administration of Medication:

2. While medication was administered in the pre-school; a second person did not witness the administration to ensure all safety measures were in place to avoid a medication error. Additionally, a witness signature was not requested on the online medication administration record form, to prompt the enter of a second staff member's name in variance to safe practice.

Fire Safety:

3. The emergency door leading into the pre-school was not easily and readily openable. A key was used to open the door which posed a safety risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective Action

Door stopper has been removed from the preschool area to ensure it is not used during preschool hours.

Preventive Action

Discuss during team meetings with all staff to highlight the dangers of not properly closing stair gate. Also discuss any issues on a day-to-day basis to ensure we can correct them straight away.

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Action

Administering medication is now signed by a staff member to witness all medication given is correct amount and, correct medication for each child. It is signed and sent onto parents through the teaching app.

Preventive Action

Discuss with all staff members, especially new staff to ensure everyone is aware of our policies and procedures. Update policy and procedures to include a witness.

Fire Safety:

Corrective Action

Registered provider has emailed Louth County Council and awaiting an assessment from the Fire Officer.

Preventive Action.

Ensure the emergency door complies with fire safety legislation.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted as each non-compliance outlined above has been addressed satisfactorily except the fire safety non-compliance. In relation to fire safety, a referral was sent to Louth Fire Safety Authority following the inspection to request an assessment to ensure the service complies with fire safety legislation. The registered provider is awaiting an assessment. Regulation 23 in relation to Fire Safety remains outstanding and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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.

(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

Compliance Information

(1) Children's attendance was recorded at time of entry and departure, a software application was used to record all information.

(3)(a) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents/guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school.

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) The registered provider was trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) and immediately available to the children.

(2) (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) A First aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all

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.

(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 record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 07/11/2023.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on the 24/10/2023 and 03/03/2023 respectively.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were supervised at all times by the four staff members.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed an expiry date of 27/03/2024.