

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016MH011
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tigers Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Rath Lodge, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A84 W983
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Therese Noonan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/12/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	52	PM	47
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Tigers Childcare is a private childcare service which is part of a chain located in a residential area of Ashbourne. The building is a purpose-built single storey facility and consists of 5 care rooms, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities. The service provides full day care, sessional and part-time care to children from 0 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). Hours of operation are from 07:30am to 6:30 pm. The rooms in the service were as follows:

**Junior Discoverers** room provided care for children from 1 to 2 years.

**Senior Discoverers** room catered for children from 1 to 2 years.

**Explorers** room facilitated the care of children from 2 to 3 years.

**Active Cubs 1** room accommodated children from 2.8 years to 3.6 years.

**Active Cubs 2** room provided care and education to children from 3.6 years to 6 years.

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

Staff employed in the service were 1 manager, deputy manager, 13 childcare staff and a cook. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, deputy manager, 10 childcare staff and a cook. A Quality Support Manager arrived to the service at 11:40 am to provide support to the manager during the inspection.

### 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/ premises and facilities. 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.

### Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of a feedback and concern received to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 01/11/2024.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, deputy manager, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was displayed in the reception area.

Seventeen staff files were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(2) (a) & (b) Thirty four validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 17 adults employed by the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 7 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 16 staff employed to work directly with the children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) (a) All new staff receive “My Induction Handbook” which outlines online training available and also informs staff regarding the policies and procedures in relation to the safety and care of the children. All staff have regular supervision meeting with the service manager.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

1. The registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Complaints Policy.
- Supporting Children’s Social Behaviour, Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing Policy
- Accident and Incident Policy.
- Recruitment Policy.

- Staff Supervision Policy.

## 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.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof 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) Present on the day of inspection were the manager, deputy manager and 10 childcare staff working directly with the 52 children attending the service. A cook was also present. A Quality Support Manager arrived in the service at 11:40 am to provide support to the manager during the inspection. The manager and deputy manager were available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. The rooms were as follows:

Discoverers room 1 had 5 children ranging in age from 11 months to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis being cared for by 2 adults.

Discoverers room 2 had 5 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years attending the service on a full day care basis being cared for by 1 adult.

Explorers room had 10 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years attending the service on a full day care basis being cared for by 2 adults.

Active Cubs 1 had 13 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months, 12 of which were attending on a full day care basis with 1 child attending on a sessional basis being cared for by 2 adults.

Active Cubs 2 had 19 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 6 years, 15 of which were attending the service on a full day care basis with 4 children attending on a sessional basis being cared for by 2 adults. One additional staff member was available to providing cover for breaks across the care rooms.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster, the manager ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(h) A record was maintained of each child's attendance on a daily basis indicating arrival and departure times.
- (l) A staff roster was maintained on a daily basis indicating the staff members arrival and departure times throughout the day.
- (k) There were records in writing completed following any accidents/ incidents that recently occurred 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.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. In some of the care rooms the theme of the month were "Autumn" and "Christmas" with the children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Junior Discoverers room sleep was child led with some children availing of an early morning nap. The remainder of the children availing of rest time went to sleep at the scheduled sleep time after the morning hot snack.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Older children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic play with both their peers and staff members.

#### Supporting relationships around children:

- A record was kept in the Junior and Senior Discoverers 1 & 2 rooms and the Explorers room of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed on to parents or guardians by an electronic tablet device. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard.
- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children. Children were well supported in finding positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. Transitions were handled smoothly with children being given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

(2)&(3) On the day of the inspection no corporal punishment or any form of physical intervention were observed between the children and staff members. No practices that were disrespectful, intimidating or emotionally harmful to pre-school children were observed. Staff members treated all pre-school children in a respectful and calm manner. During conversation with staff members they were able to detail the behavioural management strategies and the practices prohibited within the service.

### 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-
- (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.
- (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,

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in all care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. A cot room was available off the Junior Discoverers room 1 with 5 standard cots for the children who required sleep. A cot room was also available off the reception area with 4 standard cots for the younger children requiring sleep in the Senior Discoverers room. Floor beds were available and placed in the Senior Discoverers and in the Explorers rooms for the older children requiring sleep.
- (3)(a) There was a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to the rear of the premises. The area was divided into 3 spaces by wooden fencing with 2 secure side gates. The surface areas consisted of paving stones, grass and artificial grass covering. The large grass was not in use on the day of inspection.

### 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

- The Active Cubs rooms 1 was resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- The 2 outdoor spaces in use on the day of inspection were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment. Equipment in the small area for the Discoverers room had a climbing tunnel, small slide, swing, and ride on toys.
- The area for the older age group had activity unit with a climbing frame, plastic play house, sand/water table and ride on cars.

#### Non-Compliance Information

In the Junior Discoverers room, the Explorers room and Active Cubs room 1 areas of interest were poorly developed with little supporting equipment and materials to enhance the themed areas.

- In the Junior Discoverers room there was a wooden kitchen with only a pan and a hand held blender as play equipment. An animal basket was available with no animal sheds or related toys.
- In the Explorers room the blackboard was damaged. The dress up clothes were in a box stored under the blackboard making it difficult for the children to select items. There was an over reliance on plastic toys and limited toys for sensory play. The kitchen area was poorly developed with limited equipment available.
- In the Active Cubs 1 room areas of interest were poorly developed. A train table was placed in the kitchen area making it difficult for children to play with the kitchen, the kitchen was poorly equipped. Books were stored in a box which was stored on top of a low level shelving.

The physical indoor environment should be stimulating, challenging, diverse, creative and provide an enriching experience for all children to ensure meaningful sustained play.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The registered provider stated the following actions were taken;

In the Junior Discoverers room areas of interest were further developed by adding in wooden materials to the fine motor skills area, a ball pit to the sensory area and a sensory basket with various textures and materials along with sensory tiles. The kitchen area has been expanded by adding in wooden food items and kitchen utensils. New wooden animals have been added to the basket. Signage has been added to the room to clearly define all the areas.

In the Explorer's room areas of interest are now more defined. The blackboard has been replaced. The dress up clothes have been removed from the box and are now clearly visible. The plastic toys have been replaced by wooden toys.

In the Active Cubs 1 room areas of interest are now clearly defined with the children having access to all play materials. The kitchen has been replaced with more play utensils added to the area. The sensory area now has a sensory tray. The cosy area has been moved to a more suitable area and the mat has been replaced. The books have been placed into a larger wooden box on the window ledge area which is more visible and accessible for the children. Any unsuitable books have been removed. A new bookshelf has been ordered and waiting to be delivered.

Management will discuss with colleagues at the monthly team meeting the importance of maintaining the areas of interest to provide a stimulating environment for the children. A Monthly Risk Assessments will be conducted to ensure the toys are of good quality and in good repair and additional play materials will be ordered if needed.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of developed areas of interest showing new equipment and materials.

Monthly Risk Assessment to include play equipment.

Template for monthly team meeting with new section for environments/resources review.

### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted. Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## 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.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from vegetarian, meat, fish and poultry supplied by a catering company. All food was provided by the service except for the morning snack which the children brought from home. On the day of inspection, the children had sausages and beans which was served between 11:30 to 12 am. Dinner was served 2:30 and 3pm which was provided by a catering company and consisted of tuna vegetable dish. A snack was served at 4:30pm consisting of a selection of sandwiches with cheese and crackers. Water was available in the care rooms throughout the day

### 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:

On the day of inspection both the indoor and outdoor environment appeared safe. Risk assessments were conducted on a daily basis. The manager and staff members had a clear understanding of their role and range of responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children as outlined by the following:

- Accident and incident reports were forwarded to parents using an electronic device and those sampled on the day were all signed by parents providing assurance that they were informed.
- All staff members had Children’s First training.
- A Childs Safeguarding Statement was available for the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

In the Active Cubs room 1 the multicoloured floor mats were torn at the corners with foam exposed.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## Corrective & Preventive Action

### General Safety:

The multicoloured floor mats have been replaced with a wipeable floor mat. The mat has been added to the Daily Risk Assessment to ensure it remains in a good condition and is safe for use.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted of a new floor mat.

Daily Risk Assessment -safety checklist.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

## 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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 18/11/2024.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on 17/06/2024. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in June 2024.

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

**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 that the service was adequately insured for 72 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 01/07/2024 to 27/03/2025.

**Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements**

**Regulation 29 – Premises**

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

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

**Non-Compliance Information**

(d) In Active Cubs 1 the low level shelving units and chairs had old tape marks that were visibly dirty.

(e) One of taps in the sanitary accommodation in the Active Cubs room 1 and 2 supplying hot water was not working.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) The tape marks have been removed from the low-level shelving and chairs.

The cleaning of tape marks will be added to our cleaning sheets to ensure that the shelving and chairs remain in good condition.

(e) The tap unit that supplies hot water has been replaced. The taps in the sanitary areas will be included on the Monthly Risk Assessment to ensure they remain in good repair.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of tape marks removed from the shelving units and chairs.

Cleaning sheets to include the removal of tape marks on all surfaces.

Photographic evidence of new tap.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

*(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise.*

### Compliance Information

(d) Documentation reviewed on the day of inspection would demonstrate that the staff have a consistent and standardised approach to notifying the Early Years Inspectorate within 3 working days of any accident, injury and incident that occurs requiring medical attention.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)&(c) A Complaints Policy was available for the service.

A detailed record of correspondence was maintained of a recent complaint and the steps taken in the complaints process. A log of the complaint was maintained with a clear account of events recorded.

(2)(a) & (b) The Complaints Policy was implemented in practice as a detailed record was maintained of a complaint and the steps taken in the complaints process.