

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MO004
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Treasures Creche
-------------------------	-------------------------

Address of Service:	Newtown, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
----------------------------	------------------------------

Eircode:	F23 P588
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Beverley Flynn
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date of Inspection:	11 January 2023
----------------------------	-----------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	10
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Farrell
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Little Treasures Creche is a privately owned service located in Castlebar town in County Mayo. The service is registered to provide sessional and parttime services for children aged from two to six years of age. The sessional services run from 09:00-12:00 with parttime care provided until 14:00hours for 38 weeks of the year. A school aged service is also provided in the setting. There are two playrooms, a kitchen and sanitary facilities available to the preschool children on the ground floor of the building converted for use as a childcare setting. An enclosed outdoor area is provided to rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff members working directly in the service including a manager. Two additional staff are available to provide relief cover if needed in a sister service located nearby. One of the additional staff was present for a period during the inspection in addition to the registered provider.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, person in charge, 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

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premise throughout the period of inspection. A sample of attendance records viewed showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy were present in the service whenever it was in operation.

(2)

It was confirmed by the person in charge that there were four staff members working in the service with a further two relief staff members available to provide cover. The vetting documentation for one staff member had been reviewed during a previous inspection.

The following documents were available on file or not required for the five staff:

- (a) There were two written validated references from past employers, including their most recent employers for three adults. Two adults had one written validated reference from a previous employer on file.
 - (b) One written validated reference from sources other than past employers were available for two adults.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for the five adults.
 - (d) International police vetting documentation was available for two adults whose vetting documentation showed that they had lived outside of the State for more than six months as adults.
- (4) Evidence of the completion of a major award at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent qualification was available for six adults.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of the inspection with 4 adults working directly with the 21 children present on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the relevant minimum adult to children ratios were adhered to in the service. 4 adults working directly with the maximum of 22 children present at one stage of the sessional service provision with a 5th adult arriving from a sister service to provide additional supports. There were always at least 2 adults working directly with the 10 children that remained in the service for parttime care following the session that ended at 12 midday. A review of a sample of attendance records found that the registered provider ensured that there was always an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS

- The children ate a snack provided from home midway through the session with the children remaining in the service for parttime services eating a second meal at 1pm. The foods the children ate were provided from home and included sandwiches, rice cakes, prepared fruits, yogurt and cheese. Drinks in individual containers were available to the children throughout the inspection. The children sat together in groups at tables to eat their meals supervised by the adults who chatted with them making the mealtimes sociable occasions.
- The staff were observed to prompt and supervise the children washing their hands before mealtimes and after using the toilet. Signs with photographs were in place in the sanitary units to show the children correct hand washing and drying procedures. Boxes of tissues were accessible to children in the playrooms to use to blow their noses and cough into. The children's wellington boots and outdoor clothing were stored near the exit door to the outdoor area.
- Children were encouraged by the staff to use the toilet when they needed to and were given assistance when required.
- A rest area with soft seating was provided in one of the playrooms and some of the children sat there and looked at books during the inspection.
- The children did not play outdoors on the day as the weather was inclement with very heavy rain showers. The children used the ample floor space in the playrooms for physically active games with the staff during the inspection.
- Children's behaviour was positively managed in a consistent manner by the staff who encouraged the children to take turns for example when speaking at circle-time. The staff praised the children for positive behaviour. The staff let the children know when transitions between activities were approaching to prepare them, for example getting ready to tidy up before snack-time and time to put on their coats at home-time.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The interactions between the staff and children were warm and positive. The staff spoke clearly and softly when speaking to the children and used their names.
- A keyworker system was in place and the person in charge told the inspector that the keyworkers were responsible for recording observations on the children in their keyworker groups. There was a birthday wall in one playroom with the children’s dates of birth recorded. A child-led registration system was in place where each child’s name was displayed on a label on a wall. On arrival to the service the children removed their name label and “posted” it into a small post box leaving the names of children not in attendance displayed on the wall. The system helped children recognise their own name and encouraged a sense of their belonging in the service.
- At collection times the staff were observed to speak with parent/guardians and discuss how their day had been in the service. The staff told the inspector that electronic messaging systems were used to provide parents/guardians with service information in groups and to individually contact parents when needed.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- There were two playrooms with an interlinking door between them in the service. On the inspector’s arrival the children were moving freely between both playrooms and playing with toys they had chosen. One playroom was organised in clearly defined interest areas with numerous toys for imaginative play such as dressing up clothes and small world toys including a well-equipped dolls house. Children played in a restaurant area that had been created in one corner with cooker, toy food items and cooking utensils and menus displayed on the wall. A transport area had been developed with a wooden train track and a mat with road markings on the floor for the children to run toy cars along. The children had opportunities for messy play in sand and water boxes in this playroom. The playroom’s nature area had posters with pictures of flowers and birds with a toy farm and wild animals also accessible to the children encouraging an interest in nature.
- The second playroom had numerous activities for fine motor development such as puzzles and building blocks. The children attending parttime services used some of the art supplies provided to colour in pictures. Examples of the children’s artwork was displayed in the service in addition to numerous wall-displays on themes such as colours. The staff and children had made a large wall display called “Walking in a Winter Wonderland” containing individual Velcro mounted photographs of the children that could be moved around the display.

- Toys and play items were stored at low levels and accessible to the children with additional supplies kept in the office and rotated depending on children’s emerging interests. There were tables and chairs of appropriate height in relation to the children’s ages and stages of development supplied and used at mealtimes and for group work and artwork.
- An enclosed outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises but was not used during the inspection as the weather was inclement with heavy rain showers. The children used the floor space in the playrooms for physically active games with the staff during the inspection. The outdoor area provided had impact resistant ground cover with a climbing system and slide positioned on it. A covered sandbox was provided in addition to a wooden playhouse, rocker toys and planting boxes.

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 to the service was secured on the inspector’s arrival to prevent unauthorised people from entering the service and children from leaving unnoticed. A bell system was in place to gain entrance and the designated person in charge admitted the inspector to the service. The kitchen door was secured to restrict access by the children. A keypad system was in place on the gate to the rear of the service where the outdoor play area was located.
- Accurate records of the attendance of staff and children were kept in the service. The inspector was requested to provide details of attendance in the service in a visitor record log on arrival.
- Supplies of cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children.
- Low level windows at the front of the building were secured to prevent children from exiting through them unnoticed.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities were available with liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water provided. Hand sanitiser dispensers were also provided to dispense hand sanitiser.
- Foot pedal operated waste bins were provided for the disposal of waste in the service.
- The service was observed to be clean with cleaning schedules in place for all areas of the service for example toy cleaning schedules displayed on the walls in one of the playrooms. The staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables following meals.

- Boxes of tissues were supplied for children to clean their noses with.
- The children's snacks were stored appropriately under 5°C in a refrigerator in the kitchen on arrival to the service.

Administration of Medication:

- The inspector was informed that there were no children requiring medication during service hours at present. The staff were aware of safe procedures for the storage of medications.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were carried out monthly in the service with written records kept by the staff. The emergency exits were unobstructed during the inspection.

Outing:

- The person in charge told the inspector that outings were not undertaken by the service at present.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The outdoor area was slippery with large amounts of wet leaves on the ground that posed a potential hazard for children playing in the area.
2. Two chalkboards attached to fencing in the outdoor area were water damaged and insecurely attached with a potential risk of injury to children playing in the space.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The outdoor area has been power-hosed and surface is not now slippery. Leaves and twigs have been swept up and removed. The service will endeavour to have the outdoor area power-hosed more frequently to avoid a build-up of residue on the ground surface.
2. The chalkboards have been removed and are being replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. & 2.

The service submitted photographic evidence of that the outdoor area had been power-hosed and was no longer slippery and evidence of the removal of the chalkboards.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and photographic evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and found to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on the day.

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) Two staff members had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with their expiry dates recorded as the 13 June 2023.
- (2)
 - (a) Two suitably equipped first aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible locations on labelled high shelving in the playroom and in the kitchen.
 - (b) The first aid boxes were readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment.

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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having been carried out on the 06 December 2022.
- (4)
- Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) There were no records of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms available for inspection. It is acknowledged that following the inspection, the service submitted a copy of documentation showing that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on the 16 January 2023 and the smoke/fire alarms serviced on the 18 January 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

(1)(b)

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has received inspection reports in relation to firefighting equipment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the certification of the servicing of the firefighting equipment on the 16 January 2023 and the maintenance of the smoke/fire alarms on the 18 January 2023.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the service has been reviewed and found to have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

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 by staff members at all times during the inspection primarily by sight. Children were out of view of the staff when using the toilet but were within earshot if help was needed to be provided. The staff sat with the children when supervising them eating their food at mealtimes.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance in place valid until the 27 March 2023 for a maximum of 44 children at any one time in the service.