

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2017LK500
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Buddies Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Knocknasna, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 W263
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Clara Daly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	17/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Browne
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

The service is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged from 2 – 6years, Monday – Friday 09:30 – 12:30 for 38 weeks of the year, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme for eligible children. The service operates from a premise located on the grounds of Knocknasna National school, in the townland of Knocknasna, Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick. The pre-school children have access to a large playroom, sanitary accommodation for adults and children, a main entrance area and outdoor play areas to the front and rear of the service. The service is registered to cater for 22 preschool children.

### Staffing

The registered provider and three adults are working directly with the children each day. The adults all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. An additional adult is available to cover in the event of an emergency if required.

### 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 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.

### 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*
- (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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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 and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated deputy was available on the premises throughout the inspection. The registered provider was not present initially but returned shortly after the arrival of the inspector.

(c) There was 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.

(2) The following documents were available on file for the registered provider and the three staff employed in the service.

(a) References from the person's past employers, and particularly the most recent employer.

(b) References from other sources in the case of a person who had no past employers were not required.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff. Garda vetting for the four staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.

(3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each staff member taking up employment at the facility.

(4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

### 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

The policies, and procedures for the service were updated in March 2023. The folder with the policies were available on site in the service and accessible to the staff and parents to view and refer to as required.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there were 18 pre-school children present with 4 staff members on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct throughout the hours of operation.

### 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

#### BASIC NEEDS:

The service ensured that each child's learning and development was facilitated within the daily life of the service. A healthy eating policy was in place and children brought a healthy snack each day with them to the preschool.

Children's drinks were stored in the door of the fridge in the preschool room and were accessible to the children when needed.

All children were toilet trained and were independently using the bathroom facilities. Help was offered if required. Nappy changing facilities were available if needed. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were accessible in the bathrooms to ensure hygienic washing of hands.

An adult couch with soft cushions was in the library corner of the room. This provided the children with a rest space if they needed quiet time away from the general play areas.

Children had daily access to a grassy area to the rear of the premises containing lots of natural play materials and to the school yard. Play equipment and materials were taken outdoors to facilitate the children play, exploration and to extend their learning outcomes in the outdoor areas.

The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and gentle way.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The indoor environment was well laid out with a good range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences for the children. Low level tables and chairs provided a space for the children for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes. Play equipment and materials were displayed on open low-level shelving and were grouped to provide specific interest spaces. Some of the areas included a construction area, a home corner equipped with a play kitchen, food props, dolls and prams, an imagination play area with dress up clothes, a rest /relaxation reading corner with a soft couch located next to a book stand, an art/craft area and a sensorial and messy play area. Children's family photographs and educational posters were displayed on the walls of the room at children's eye level.

The outdoor areas of the service offered the children a space for physical play, for movement and for exploration.

### 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 and the two staff members had up to date first aid responder training.
- (2)(a) The registered provider ensured that a suitable equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the preschool.

### 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) Completed monthly fire drills were available on file. The most recent fire drill was recorded on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2025.
- (b) A record of the maintenance of the smoke alarm system and firefighting equipment in the service were available for review by the Inspectorate. The smoke alarm system was serviced on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 and firefighting equipment were serviced in November 2024.
- (4) A fire action notice was clearly displayed in the service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
  - (a) *of sound and stable structure,*
  - (b) *safe and secure,*
  - (c) *kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
  - (d) *cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
  - (e) *equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

## Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises appeared safe and secure. The front gate was closed and there was a system in place to ensure no children could exit the premises unaccompanied and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation. The heating system was off due to the time of the year, but room temperatures were within the normal limits. Openable windows were in place to ensure a means of air circulation.

(d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas. A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in the premises. The premises was rodent proofed, and a pest control company checked the facility in March 2025.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available at the service. A nappy changing facility was available if required.