

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2017WD500		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Maud's Little Learners		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carrigahilla, Stradbally, Kilmacthomas, Dungarvan, Waterford.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	X42 FX46		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Klara Prud'Homme		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/03/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM n/a
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.Ryan.		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

Maud's Little Learners is a private sessional early years service located in a building which was previously used as a national school, in mid-county Waterford on the outskirts of Stradbally, a rural coastal village. The building is under the ownership of the local Catholic Parish Council. The premises has two childcare rooms, sanitary accommodation and kitchen. There is a large outdoor play area on the premises which provides a variety of play opportunities for the children. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:30hrs to 12.30hrs and offers school age childcare from 14:00hrs to 17:00hrs Monday to Friday.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the owner/manager and is part of the staff compliment. The service has two additional employees with qualifications at the minimum Level 5 and above in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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/. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10 11 17 and 19.

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,
- (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. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the registered provider was on the premises.

(2)  
On review of the staff files, it was evident that one new staff member was employed to work with the children since the fit for purpose inspection on the 22 September 2022.

The following was observed on the new staff members file:

- (a) There were two written validated references from past employers.
- (b) Not applicable as all written references were from past employers.
- (c) There was evidence of a completed Garda vetting disclosure certificate from An Garda Síochána.
- (d) Not applicable as the staff member had not resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)  
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5, and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file

### 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 registered provider had compiled all of the policies, procedures and statements required under Schedule 5 of the Childcare act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The policies and procedures were systematically organised into folders and were clear, relevant and specific to Maud’s Little Learners. All the policies had been updated and signed by the staff. A condensed version of the policies and procedures was available in a concise user-friendly parent handbook.

### 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.*
- (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 the inspection there were 17 children from 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff.
- (3)  
The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for the Childcare (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

#### Compliance Information

All information required under the Regulation 16(1) (a to g): for parents or guardians of children proposing to attend the service were available for parents in the handbook or on the main entrance notice board, such as photographs and staff details. The registered provider informed the inspector, that all parents or guardians were provided with this information on their child's enrolment. They also informed that all parents signed a parental agreement at the beginning of the year to confirm that they agreed to the procedures of 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*

#### Compliance Information

##### Supporting Relationships

The registered provider informed the inspector that an open day for the children and their parents was held in May last year, 2022, and is scheduled again for this May 2023. This event was held outdoors as an opportunity for children and parents to explore the outdoor play environment together.

Parents were actively encouraged and welcomed. The service communicated with parents through social media applications, phone calls, and informally at collection and drop off times. The registered provider stated the service promoted parents as partners and recognised that parents are the child's first educators and know them best.

The atmosphere in the service was friendly and welcoming, and all interactions between the children and staff were observed to be respectful and supportive.

The children were observed to be happy and mixed well with each other especially while outdoors in the play environment. One child was observed drying off the large timber carriage with a towel and using a small scrubbing brush on the wheels while informing the inspector he was cleaning and getting it ready for his friends to play in.

The children were greeted and welcomed by the staff each morning. On a small table at the entrance door to the care room there was a tray of coloured stones that the children had decorated themselves. Each child's name was inscribed on their personal stone. On arrival every morning each child moved their stone from a tray into a basket as a means of registering their attendance. This activity assisted in marking the transitions of coming into and leaving the service. On the back of each stone the child's parents had written a short message.

The registered provider remarked on how these messages supported the child's settling in process, and how this connection with home, made the child feel reassured and comforted as children would often ask the staff to read this to them. There were free standing framed photographs of children's families displayed at their height which enabled them to hold them and talk about their families to their friends and staff.

On the day of the inspection one child was settling into the service. Staff were observed giving comfort and one-to-one attention to this child regularly. It was observed that the registered provider called the parent who was on standby before the service ended so that the shorter day was less demanding on the child.

### **Programme of Activities and its Implementation.**

The service had a documented detailed programme of care and learning, with examples and photographs supporting children's learning through the naturally occurring medium of play. The registered provider informed the inspector that the programme was inspired by the Froebel method of education as this theorist believed that play was the principal method of learning in early childhood.

The registered provider also stressed that since the Covid pandemic that the session was in the main, spent outdoors. To facilitate the largely outdoor emphasis the registered provider had installed a perspex covered outdoor cloak room for coats, wellingtons, waterproof pull-ups and bags. Furthermore, an outdoor shelter was also set up with comfortable furniture to provide respite from the elements and afford an opportunity for children to withdraw and relax away from the active outdoor physical environment.

The outdoor environment was observed to be well laid out to support children with various opportunities for challenging, creative and imaginative play and learning experiences. The outdoor furniture is comprised of tree logs, timber and plastic chairs and tables. Each child had their own outdoor chair, and some were observed sitting and playing with freshly made playdough. Items such as a timber crawling tunnel with an overarching climbing wall, see saw, balance beam, mud kitchen, water flutes and music pipes were some of the activities available. The cemented area provided for ride on activities with trikes, bicycles, and cars.

Some children opted to remain indoors and were supported in doing so and were happily engaged in the craft area of the room decorating the cardboard teddy bears that they had made the previous day. The registered provider explained that all aspects of the service were created for children to express themselves freely, and to value children for exactly who they are and all their efforts.

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This was evident on the “proud wall” a large display of children’s paintings, drawings photographs, all at the children’s height. The registered provider explained what goes up on this wall was decided by the children themselves. The ‘field’ was another aspect of the setting available to the children which was enclosed by mature Leyland trees. These trees supported opportunities for risky and challenging play.