

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018TY509
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Name of Service:	Lisgorm T/A Buttons And Bows Childminding Service
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Address of Service:	Bank Street, Templemore, Co. Tipperary
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rosaleen Fairbrother
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	30/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

This full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old. A registered school aged care service is also provided.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 7.30am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service which operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 38 weeks of the year, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a detached, three-storey premises in the town of Templemore in North Tipperary which was formerly a bank and residence. The early years service is located on the ground floor while the school aged care service is operated from the upper floors. The early years service comprises of 3 activity rooms, sanitary accommodation areas, sleep room and kitchen. The grounds at the side of the premises are available to all of the children for outdoor play.

This is one of four services operated by the registered provider in North Tipperary and Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service but is available to call on when required. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are six staff employed to work directly with the children, including one member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Additional staff are employed to work in the school aged care service, some of whom also work in the early years service when required, such as relief for staff leave or breaks and assistance with food preparation and serving.

A student doing childcare studies currently does work experience in the service one day each week.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 20(1)(2), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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

(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

The staff files of seven staff members who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 29 September 2021 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The staff file for the other member of staff had been reviewed previously and found to be compliant.

(2)(a) Written validated references from past employers were available in respect of the seven members of staff.

(b) Written validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of two members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all seven members of staff. Relevant records were kept on file.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(4) All staff who worked directly with the children held a recognised qualification in early childhood care and education or a letter from the minister stating that their studies to date qualified them to work in an early years setting. The student, who was rostered on work experience every Thursday as part of their studies towards a level 6 qualification in early childhood care and education, held a level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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) There were 27 children aged between 9 months and 5 years old being supervised by 6 staff in the morning and 26 children being supervised by 6 staff in the afternoon. A seventh member of staff was present to relieve staff for their breaks at midday. Another member of staff was present during the early afternoon to prepare the afternoon snack and dinner. The children and staff were divided between three rooms with two staff in each room in the morning. The member of staff employed in the Preschool room in the morning under AIM, moved to the other rooms after 12pm to help relieve staff for breaks.

The registered provider was present in the service on the afternoon of the inspection to facilitate the inspection process.

On the day of inspection there were 9 children aged 3 – 5 years old in the Preschool room in the morning with 2 staff and 8 children in the afternoon with 1 member of staff.

There were 10 children aged 18 months to 3 years old in the Wobbler room with 2 staff morning and afternoon.

There were 8 children aged 9 to 19 months old in the Baby room with 2 staff morning and afternoon.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the recommendations throughout the day.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 members of staff present in the service while it is in operation.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to one of the three activity rooms and to outdoor play on a daily basis. Each room was bright with natural light from large windows on one wall and provided the children with a range of activities and experiences. The walls held samples of their artwork and photos of the children.

(b) There was a sleep room furnished with 6 cots that was available to the children under 2 years old who slept during the day. Stackable camp beds were available for the older children who slept during the day which were set up in the Wobbler room when required. There were cosy seating areas in each room where the children could rest and relax during the day.

(2) There was a large walled garden at the side of the premises which was available to the children for outdoor play. The main part of the garden had a grass surface surrounded by mature trees and shrubs. There was an area between the grass area and the access door from the premises which was covered with soft fall matting and could be used by the children in all weathers. The children had access to outdoor play several times each day.

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 rooms were equipped with furniture, toys and materials suitable to the age and stage of development of the children using the rooms. Furniture included comfortable armchairs for the Baby room, highchairs for mealtimes for the youngest children and tables and chairs in each room for tabletop activities and dining. Toys were stored in plastic tubs that fit into the low-level cube shelves which were easily accessible to the children.

Large, vinyl covered foam mats were used in each room for floor play activities.

Freestanding toys and equipment included play kitchens, dolls houses, standing activity centres and vinyl covered foam shapes that the children enjoyed sitting and playing on.

Outdoor equipment included fixed units such as the large climbing frame with slide and two swing sets in the grass area and spring-based rockers in the soft fall area. Other materials included a freestanding climbing unit and slide for the younger children on the soft fall area, ride on toys, push toys, planting areas, seating areas and balls.

There was a storage area for wet weather gear and rubber boots inside the premises, near the door to the outdoor play area.

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 healthy eating policy. Most of the food eaten by the children while attending the service was supplied by the service. Children attending the ECCE session sometimes brought a packed lunch to eat at the morning snack. The three-week rotating menu plan was displayed in the entrance hall where it could be viewed by parents. Meals served during the day included breakfast, morning snack, afternoon snack and dinner. On the day of inspection the afternoon snack of buttered toast and spaghetti hoops in tomato sauce was served at 12.15pm with drinks of water. Dinner of chicken casserole and vegetables was prepared and cooked in the afternoon to be ready for serving at 3pm.

Drinking water was available in each room in a jug on the drinks trolley. Each child had their own lidded beaker or drink bottle which was stored in the drinks trolley where the children could access it when they wanted a drink. Drinking vessels were refilled with water when required.

There were two children who drank infant formula. Bottles were brought in made up then stored in the fridge in the kitchen until required or cartons of ready-made formula were brought in and poured into a sterilised bottle when required.

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

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff in each room were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children in their room in the attendance registers held in each room.

(3) The service manager greeted all visitors to the service at the entrance door before authorising their entry to the premises. Visitors to the service, such as the inspector, signed the visitors log on entry to the service.

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 staff recently updated their first aid training. The staff present on the day of inspection held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There were two first aid boxes in the service that were easy to access when required.
(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child attending the service.

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 firefighting 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 17 December 2023.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in February 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced on a quarterly basis.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for up to 50 children at any one time valid until 27 March 2024.