

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D.: TU2019DL005

Name of Service: Little Twigs & Forest Friends

Address of Service: Meenagory, Buncrana, Co Donegal

Email Address: ursmclaughlin@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Ursula McLoughlin

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change:	The service is seeking to increase the number of children cared for from 33 to 44 children. An additional portacabin has been provided on site.
Proposed Number of Children:	Increase in the number of children cared for from 33 to 44 in the service. A Maximum of 44 children to be cared for on a sessional basis. A Maximum of 30 children to be cared for on a part-time basis.
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	A maximum of 44 sessional children and a maximum of 30 children on a part-time basis.
Registered change:	Change in Number of Children that can be accommodated from 33 to 44 (Max 30 Part-Time) children

Date of Inspection:	0	8	0	8	2	0	2	4
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Inspection undertaken by: A Spain

Title: Early years inspector

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Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Early Years Inspectorate, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co Offlay
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Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Part-Time & Sessional Service for 44 (Max 30 Part-Time) Children
Date of Registration	19th August 2024

Authority to Inspect
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Little Twigs & Forest Friends is a privately operated outdoor based service located on the outskirts of Buncrana town in Donegal. The service cares for children in the age range 2 to 6 years between the hours of 9.00am and 2.00pm. A sessional service is provided between the hours of 9.30am and 12.30pm
Premises	The service is operational from an enclosed spacious forest area on family property. The service provides an outdoor based programme of activities for children. Portacabins on site provide shelter from inclement weather conditions, a kitchen, an office and sanitary accommodation for both children and staff.
Staffing	The service is staffed by five adults working directly with the children. All staff have certification to confirm childcare qualifications at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6 to level 8. The registered provider works directly in the service.

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<p>Methodology</p>	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
<p>Acknowledgements</p>	<p>The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and person in charge, who were present on the day of the inspection.</p>

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.

Requirement met:

(1)

This requirement has been met.

The service has both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both staff members work directly in the preschool service.

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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.

Requirement met:

(1)

This requirement has been met.

The service proposes to care for 44 children. A total of 44 will attend the service on a sessional basis or a total of 30 will attend on a part-time basis. A total of five staff are available daily to care for the children present.

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.

(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 or

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a)

There are adequate indoor and outdoor play facilities for all the children present. The portacabin for indoor use is stocked with a variety of jigsaws, puzzles, games, counting and magnet toys for tabletop activities. Paints, crayons, pencils and paper are available for arts and crafts work. Low level seating is provided for children to sit.

The outdoor area is surfaced with a combination of bark, grass, sand and rubber mats. Natural materials available for play include timber pallets used to provide raised seating, worktops, notice and display boards. Tree trunks are utilised to anchor wooded toys and animals. Water and sand trays are provided. The variety of toys and play equipment outdoors includes a large wooden boat safely anchored to the ground, timber playhouses and planks anchored over small inclines used to make low-level bridges. Toys on wheels include diggers, tractors and lorries. Dolls and prams are provided in a timber playhouse. An open roofed timber shelter is available to play outdoors during inclement weather conditions.

(b)

Logs and timber picnic tables and stools provide seating outdoors. Rest areas outdoors include mats and cushions under a hammock tied to tree trunks. Logs with cushions and rugs provide further rest and relaxation areas to sit and read books. Low level beds are stored in the office off the portacabin proposed for use should a child require to rest or sleep during the course of their day in the service.

(3)(a)

The outdoor space proposed for use by children cared for in the portacabin is secured with heavy duty plastic fencing safely anchored to timber posts. A timber gate, bolted from the outside denies children access from the outdoor play area to the carpark at the front of the service. Play equipment for climbing, balancing and physical manoeuvring is made from durable natural materials including timber and metal and is safely anchored to the ground outdoors.

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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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

A separate portacabin is available to provide kitchen facilities including hot water at a sink for wash up and cleaning facilities. A refrigerator is provided in the kitchen to refrigerate perishable foods and snacks. Food is provided by parents and guardians for children in attendance in the service on both a sessional and part-time basis.

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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

A key is provided on the door of the portacabin to guard against unsupervised exit by children. A smooth timber ground finish is provided outside of the portacabin and leading to the outdoor play area. Low level sockets in the portacabin are provided with protective covers. Cleaning equipment and chemicals are stored in the kitchen and in an area children are denied access to. Staff personal belongings are kept in the office in the service. All boundaries of the outdoor play area are fenced with heavy duty plastic fencing to guard against unsupervised exit by children to the forest area outside of the boundaries of the service. The car park is located at the front of the service and a timber gate denies children access to this area when playing outdoors.

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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.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)

There is one person trained in first aid for children and is at all times, immediately available. Documented evidence was submitted to the inspector to confirm that a second person is due to complete FAR training on the 5 September and 6 September 2024. Evidence of same will be submitted to the Early years inspector on completion.

(2)(a)(b)

A first aid box is located on a high level shelf in the playroom and in an area above child's height.

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.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)(a)(b)

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A record is maintained of monthly fire drills as conducted in the service. The maintenance record for fire fighting equipment confirmed that an annual service was conducted on the 19 June 2024.

(4)

The evacuation procedure for the playroom is on display on the wall in the room. A fire assembly point is posted in the carpark at the front of the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to the inspection.

The registered provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered provider's compliance with Regulation 28.

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.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(a) The portacabin proposed for use in the service has no evidence of dampness or mould growth.

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(b) Entrance to the service is secured with gates. Bottled water provides a safe source of drinking water to children in attendance.

(c) The four windows in the proposed playroom provide both natural lighting and ventilation in the room. The fluorescent light fittings in the playroom are covered with shatterproof diffusers to protect against breakage and shattering of glass.

(d) The room in the service was clean and well maintained on the day of inspection. Lidded bins are provided to store waste and refuse both inside and in the outdoor play area.

(e) Four chemical toilets provide adequate sanitary accommodation for up to 44 children in daily attendance in the service. A separate staff toilet and hand washing facilities are provided for staff working in the service. Insulated containers for hot water, mounted hand soap dispensers and troughs are provided for handwashing purposes. An enclosed water tank is used to store filtered rainwater harvested for collection and use in the service. The sink in the kitchen is plumbed with hot water for use at hand washing facilities adjacent to the sanitary accommodation. Lidded bins are provided in the handwashing areas for used disposable paper towels.

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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1) An area of 25.32m² is provided in the proposed playroom to accommodate up to 11 children in daily attendance in a part-time service in the room.

(2)

Adequate floor space is provided to accommodate the proposed number of children in the age range 4 to 5 years and in a part-time service. The area available is proposed to care for a maximum of 11 children on a part-time basis or 13 children on a sessional basis.