

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019DY001
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Name of Service:	Little Treasures Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Bluebell Community Centre, Bluebell Road, Dublin 12, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breda Bowes
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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
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Description of service

Little Treasures Playgroup is a privately owned early years service providing care and education to children aged two to six years on a sessional basis. The service is located in a residential area in Bluebell in Inchicore, South County Dublin and is open from 09:00 to 12:00 each weekday. The service operates from one purposely adapted room on the first floor of the Bluebell Community Centre. Outside the opening hours of the service the room is used by other community groups within the centre. The children have access to an enclosed astro pitch adjacent to the community centre, and also have use of a large indoor hall for gross motor play.

Staffing

The service currently employs 4 adults who work directly with the children each day, not including the registered provider. On the day of inspection these 4 adults were present and working in the service. The registered provider was not present for the inspection.

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/ information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1).

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 4th March 2024 in respect of Regulation 9(2)(c) Garda Vetting. An adult present on the day of inspection had been employed to work directly with the children in the service since 8th January 2024 and a Garda Vetting disclosure had not been obtained for the adult. A response was received from the service on the 5th March 2024 which adequately addressed the risk identified.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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

(2) Documentation was reviewed in respect of the 4 adults employed to work in the service. The following records were available for the adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from 2 sources for 3 of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau for 3 of the adults which was dated within the required timeframe.

(d) Not applicable, no adult required international police vetting.

(3) 3 of the adults held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. One of the adults did not require a relevant qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a) (b) (c)

The registered provider did not ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children as follows:

- There were no references available for one of the adults who has been working in the service since the 8th January 2023.
- A Garda Vetting disclosure was not available and had not been obtained for the adult.

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 4th March 2024 in respect of Regulation 9(2)(c) Garda Vetting.

(3) A review of documentation evidenced the registered provider had not taken the required steps to ensure that new recruits were suitable and competent before allowing them access to children:

- A Garda vetting disclosures had not been obtained by the registered provider prior to the adults working directly in the service with the children.
- No references had been obtained in respect of one adult working directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two references were obtained from the adult identified and validated by the registered provider. Going forward, no employee and/or unpaid worker will be employed or on the premises until two references are obtained and validated. This action will be implemented by the service provider.

In addition to the immediate action notice, the Garda Vetting application is monitored regularly for completion. Going forward, no employee, unpaid worker, student and/or contractor will be employed or on the premises unless Garda Vetting has been completed. This process will be overseen by the registered service provider. The employee will not be present in the service until the vetting form has been processed and received.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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.*
- (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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 17 pre-school children attending the service during the service being supervised by 4 adults during the inspection.
- (8)(c)
Not applicable, the service is not operated single-handedly.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)
A sample of 10 records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspector to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the 10 records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1).

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff stated a healthy eating policy is in place in the service and that lunch is provided daily by the parents or guardians of the children in attendance. Children's drinks were accessible to the children in the care room at all times. Children were encouraged to assist in the preparation for lunch time, handing out food and drinks to their peers. Staff members sat with the children engaged in conversation during mealtime.

Children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Staff demonstrated compassion and kindness during interactions observed by the inspector and spoke to children at their level using gentle tones and positive language. Staff managed minor disputes between children by encouraging children to share their feelings and problem solve.

Staff supported the children to wash their hands regularly throughout the inspection including before lunch and after toileting. A rest area was available in the care room if children wanted to take a break away from the group. Staff were observed sitting with the children and supporting them during play, offering suggestions to enhance play experiences.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into the care room was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environment was safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff stated they have not had to administer medication to a child in the service to date but appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape route was clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. The person in charge adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

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

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the registered provider and children in the service at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no staff member employed to work in the service trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) on the day of inspection as required. It is acknowledged that staff members present had paediatric first aid training.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

First Aid Responder (FAR) training was booked for one member of staff, who will be on the premises at all times. All staff courses and training will be documented entailing the end date of each certificate to ensure that courses are completed and kept up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of 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 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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service.
 - (b) There was record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system had taken place as required.
- (4)
- The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.