

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019LH001
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Name of Service:	Woddlers & Toddlers
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Address of Service:	St Patrick's GAA, Lordship, Riverstown, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91PH2T
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Name of Registered Provider:	Irene Moley
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood
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

Woddlers & Toddlers in Lordship, Co. Louth is one of two private services owned by the registered provider. This is a sessional service that operates from 9am- 12.00pm Monday - Friday. The service caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children with an age range of 2 ½ to 6 years.

The service is located on the first floor of the Community building in Lordship Co Louth. The premises consists of 1 playroom with adjoining sanitary accommodation and a separate storage & kitchenette area. An enclosed outdoor area is available on the grounds of the community building.

Staffing

The registered provider and five childcare staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children.

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 and safety. 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 would like 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.

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 10.25am. The registered provider arrived on the premises at 11.00am. All were present for the duration of the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Six staff files were reviewed including files for the registered provider and five childcare staff. The following vetting documents were available:

- (a) & (b) There were 2 written references available for 5 staff members and the registered provider. All references were validated as required.
- (c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 6 members of staff. The registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Following a review of the staff files presented, international police vetting was not required at this time.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all members of staff, including the registered provider who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.25am and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 11 preschool children aged 2 years 7 months to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members. The registered provider arrived on the premises at approximately 11.00am and was present for the remainder of the inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic Needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before snack times after toileting and noses were wiped frequently.
- The children's drinks cups and bottles were stored in the care room, and they were accessible as required during the session.
- Snack time was observed to be a social, interactive occasion with all staff and children observed seated at the tables. During this time the children and staff were observed to chat about 'healthy eating' which was the theme of the month. The conversations were related to food at home and baking activities e.g. *"I love raisins and scones ...does mamo make scones ...?"* Children who required additional time to relax and eat their lunch were facilitated and were supported by the staff e.g. *"well done ...did you eat up all your lunch...?"*
- The children were observed to carry out a relaxing activity. During this time the lights were turned down and gentle music was played. The children rested their heads on their arms and quietly engaged in the activity.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key person system was in place in the service with staff members allocated a group of children. The key person took the lead in, maintaining relationships with their families, and documenting their learning and development.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff member for example, *"how are we getting on", "oh thank you" "well done..... good job" "do you need some help ...?"*. The children were observed to seek out the staff for assistance.

- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. A monthly newsletter is emailed to parents informing them of curriculum plans and upcoming activities that will be happening in the service. The staff confirmed that a small messaging service and email is also used to keep parents informed about the children’s care needs and activities happening in the service
- The staff when questioned confirmed that regular staff meetings are held. The staff also meet on a regular basis with the staff from the ‘sister’ service.

Physical and Material Environment

- A large variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available. The toys and equipment were in clear labelled boxes and were positioned on open low-level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- The playroom was a bright and spacious play area with a variety of developed areas of interest. The interest areas were well resourced with a variety of toys and equipment including a selection of real-world materials. The children were observed to engage in imaginary play and role play at times throughout the session and this was supported by the staff “Welcome to our cave” and a loft area were soft and relaxing areas that supported children who wished to take a break from activities. Sensory mats and trays containing rice and pasta were also available and this supported the children who wanted to engage in sensory play.
- The staff confirmed that the children had a change of environment to the outdoor area prior to the inspector’s arrival. A variety of play equipment is available in the area including a digging area, a partially covered area and wooden teepee, a blackboard, tyres for climbing and a wooden truck seat with logs

Programme Of Activities.

- “Our planning wall” detailed the monthly and thematic curriculum plans. Details of the children’s emerging interests were also on display and the staff confirmed how the children’s interests were incorporated into the curriculum plan.
- Scrap books had been commenced for the children and contained a variety of the children’s artwork, observations. ‘My first day’ pictures and photographs linked to some of the monthly themes e.g. healthy eating’ and activities in the service.
- ‘Our daily routine’ was on display in both written and photographic format. The children were also provided with choice during many of the activities e.g. “....it is your birthday today so you get to choose what goes on the tables” during the tabletop activity” Also during story time the children were facilitated to choose what story they would like to read.

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

Lunches for morning snack, were provided by the parents and consisted of a variety of sandwiches/ rolls/ wraps, fresh fruit pieces, cheese and yoghurts. Perishable food items were appropriately stored in a fridge. Potable drinking water was available, and the children had access to their drink bottles.

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 ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for three staff members in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box available in service was stored in a conspicuous location where they were easily accessible in the event of an emergency and out of the reach of children.