

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DL004		
Name of Service:	Laugh and Learn Childcare		
Address of Service:	Foyleside, Tromaty, Quigley's Point, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F93 KHH1		
Name of Registered Provider:	Carrie Orr		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	11/12/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM 32
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94		
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo and K Folan		
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		

Description of service

Laugh and Learn Childcare is a privately owned and operated early years' service situated in an area off a caravan park on the shores of Lough Foyle in north Donegal. The service currently provides full day care from 8.00am-6.30pm each weekday and a morning and afternoon sessional service from 9.00am-12.00pm and 12.15pm-3.15pm. The service caters for children aged 0-6 years and is also registered to provide a school age service. The service operates from a dedicated converted section of a single-story building and includes two indoor playrooms, a kitchenette, a sleep room, an office and sanitary facilities. An additional sessional service from a standalone single story prefabricated unit is located on the site of the preschool. The building is directly accessed from the outdoor play area and contains one large care room and sanitary accommodation for children. Children attending the service have access to a number of outdoor play areas including an outdoor sheltered area, a cycle/running area and a garden area and a large polytunnel classroom.

Staffing

A total of 13 adults were employed in the service at the time of inspection, including the registered provider. There were 12 adults present on the day and worked directly with the children. There was one adult employed to work in the kitchen. The registered provider was present for the inspection and worked directly with the 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 inspectors wish 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*

(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). There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b). The records of all 13 adults employed in the service were reviewed. 18 written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of 13 adults employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 adults. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4) 12 adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement

Non-Compliance Information

(2) Validation of references was required in respect of the following,

- Four previous employer references
- Two reputable source reference

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

References have now been checked and validated.

A check list will be displayed on staff folders to confirm when references have been checked and reviewed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Outstanding validated references submitted.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 9 (2) have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There were 13 adults working directly with 47 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Room 1: 5 adults cared 17 children aged from 2 to 5 years of age.

Room 2: 3 adults cared for 8 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age

Room 3: 4 adults cared for 12 children aged 2 years to 3 years of age.

At 1.30pm in the afternoon the ratios were as follows,

Room 1: 3 adults cared 12 children aged from 2 to 5 years of age.

Room 2: 3 adults cared for 8 children aged from 11 months to 2 years of age.

Room 3: 3 adults cared for 12 children aged 2 years to 3 years of age.

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
- (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.

On the day of the inspection three care rooms were in operation in the service. The care rooms were laid out with various materials and resources to create interesting areas of play for the children according to their age and stage of development. The sessional preschool room was well laid out and divided into a variety of interest areas such a messy play area with craft items for glueing and sticking and a sensory tray with artic animals and white gloop. an additional art area with natural objects and paints was available to the children throughout the session.

A soft furnishing area to facilitate rest contained a sofa, cushions, rugs and a book area. A separate table contained a large quantity of small world animal figures where a group of children were engaged in play. Staff in the sessional preschool room were attentive to the needs of the children and supported children when minor disagreements occurred over the sharing of toys. Children's imaginative play was facilitated well within the service for example there was a construction area with play blocks and vehicles, a home corner with dolls, buggies and playhouses, and a hairdressing area, complete with real life equipment.

In each care room, staff members were observed to speak to children in calm, respectful tones and the inspectors observed warm interactions between the children and adults in the service. Children in the baby room were held and cuddled while being bottle fed.

The service places an emphasis on the outdoors, and on the day of inspection, each group of children were observed spending time outdoors. The outdoor area is a bark covered surface enclosed with a fence. Within the area, there is a wooden teepee and mud kitchen, a music wall, a climbing frame, an area for digging and exploring, a variety of ride on vehicles, and items for water play. An additional outdoor area is situated beside the baby room. This area is covered to allow access in all weather.

The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals. In the baby room, children were placed for sleep throughout the day, according to their

individual needs. Older pre-school children who required sleep, were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon.

The service promoted healthy eating with food and snacks being provided at regular intervals during the day. All food provided in the service was prepared on site. Children had two substantial meals and three snacks throughout the day. Children with allergies were catered for and an alternative menu was available for vegetarians. On the day of inspection, the main meal consisted of vegetable soup and mashed potatoes. The alternative option on the day was chicken soup with mashed potatoes. A dessert of custard was also available to the children. Drinking was readily available to children. Children attending for a three-hour sessional service, brought their food from home which was stored in the fridge in the sessional preschool room.

The service used an application where information can be shared with families about activities completed in the service. For the younger children the application is used to share information with families about their eating drinking, sleeping and nappy changes throughout the day. The information for all children was regularly updated with detailed reports and photos on the activities of the day and week.

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

General Safety:

- The service was secured by way of gates at each entrance point. Each gate was restricted by bolts which were not accessible to the children.
- The main building entrance was secure and locked upon the inspector's arrival at the service.
- Highchairs were in good condition and fitted with five-point safety harnesses.
- Cleaning agents were stored securely out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured via fencing to prevent a child from leaving the service unsupervised.
- The hot water provided at the children's wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature below 43°C for hand washing.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were provided in the children toilets with warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly, including before mealtimes, following using the toilet.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were carried out every ten minutes and a record of checks was maintained.
- The temperature in the baby sleep room on the day of inspection was 17.4° Celsius. In the preschool full day care room, children over the age of two slept on stackable beds. The temperature in this room on the day of inspection was 18.1° Celsius. Both rooms were within the required temperatures for safe sleep.
- At sleep time the children's stackable beds were positioned with the recommended 50cm apart.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 13 staff members. However, two of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYIRN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. Nappy changing was observed from 12:19, the following posed a risk for infection control,
 - Children's hands were not routinely washed after each nappy change.
 - Adult's hands were not routinely washed before or after applying gloves.
 - Soap was not available in the sink adjacent to the nappy changing unit.
 - Changing mats were not routinely wiped down between each use.
 - 2 nappy cream containers were not labelled with children's names.
3. Changing mats located in the both the portacabin preschool and the main building were torn in parts and in need of replacing, this posed as a risk for infection control as they could not be cleaned effectively.
4. The mechanical ventilation system in the portacabin preschool required routine cleaning. A significant build-up of heavy dust had accumulated, causing the system not to operate efficiently.
5. An activity unit in the baby room was stained and in need of deep cleaning.

Safe Sleep:

Individual sleep records were available for the children, however data on their breathing pattern during sleep was not recorded.

The baby sleep room was dark and did not allow for adequate visual checks to be carried out.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The two staff members have since had their vetting renewed. With the new legislation, we were in process of vetting all staff again, with only two to go on the day of inspection. A check list will be displayed on vetting which will indicate when vetting needs updated.

Infection Control:

1. A copy of the nappy changing policy was given to each member of staff. Children wash their hands after being changed. The tubs of cream belonged to the managers child that wasn't labelled. Nappy policy given to each staff member and discussed in the staff meeting. A staff member has been assigned to ensure all cream items are labelled and towels and soaps are refilled.
2. The changing mats have been replaced with new ones. A staff member has been assigned to do checks when mats need to be replaced.
3. The ventilation has been cleaned.
4. This activity unit was cleaned and washed correctly.

Safe Sleep:

5. Sleep records have been updated to see the child's colour.
6. We are also waiting on a electrician to install a new dimming light for sleep checks.
7. A night light has been put in the sleep room. We are able to see the child's colour and breathing patterns very clear.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copy of vetting applications submitted.

Infection Control:

1. Evidence of vetting submitted.
2. Evidence of staff being updated on the nappy changing policy submitted.
3. Photo of new changing mats submitted.

4. Photo of clean vent submitted.
5. Photo of cleaned activity unit submitted.

Safe Sleep:

6. Copy of updated sleep log submitted.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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) On the day of inspection, the registered provider ensured that a sufficient number of staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.
- (2) (a) A suitably equipped labelled first aid box was stored in the office. (b) The first aid equipment was readily available at all times if a child required first aid treatment in 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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(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) (b) A list of all firefighting equipment with the most recent maintenance date of September 2024 was available within the service.

(2) (c) The required records were made available to the inspector on the day.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in a conspicuous location throughout the preschool service for safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) The registered provider did not ensure that the required monthly fire drills had taken place within the preschool service with the last recorded fire drill recorded as taking place on 20 September 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

These will be documented in the future. We have appointed a fire safety officer to ensure that drills are carried on a monthly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of up-to-date fire drills submitted.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 26 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the service, for 57 children in a full day care service up until 28 March 2025.

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