

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020GY002				
Name of Service:	Little Stars				
Address of Service:	Caheroyane Ave, Athenry, Co. Galway				
Eircode:	H65 E802				
Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Noone				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	17/01/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>6</td> <td>PM</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	AM	6	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A- (1st Floor-Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.</p>				
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.				
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

The service is in a residential area of Athenry town in a purpose-built building. The service was registered under the present provider in 2021 and operates a sessional service for pre-school children aged between 2 years to 6 years of age. The service offers an early childhood care and education, sessional care programme from 9 am to 12 pm, Monday to Friday. The premises has a playroom, kitchen and sanitary facilities and there is a secured outdoor play area to the front of the service.

Staffing

There are 2 adults working in the service which includes the register provider. The 2 adults working directly with the children in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education to a minimum of level 5 in Early Childhood Education.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 25, 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These 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 inspector wishes 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.
Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- (2)(a) & (b) Four of the 4 validated references on file in respect of the 2 adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of 2 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for the 2 adults as they had not lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) The 2 adults working in the service had evidence of a childcare qualification to at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (3) On the day of inspection, there were 2 adults working directly with 6 preschools children.

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*
- (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

(19)(1) (a) and (b)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The children sat together and ate their snacks provided by their parents and guardians. The food observed was healthy and nutritious. Snacks consisted of a selection of sandwiches, brown bread, cheese, yogurts, and fruit.
- There was water on a drinks table for children to self-serve from their own drinks throughout the session.
- Children were observed enjoying their snacks under the supervision of the staff. The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried environment.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Children were toilet trained and either toileted independently or with some assistance as required. The adults responded to children's cues quickly when required.

- A nappy changing area was available for children as required during the session.
- The early years inspector observed the staff supervising children's hand washing before and after snack time, after toileting, after blowing their noses and after messy play.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a competent and positive manner by the adults.

PHSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The layout of the playroom allowed the adults to supervise the children as they moved into the different interest areas.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving with visually labelled containers that were readily accessible by the children.
- Appropriately child sized tables and chairs were provided in the naíonra, and the children had the option of both tabletop activities and floor play.
- There was child size soft seating for rest and relaxation in the playroom for the children to rest or opt out of an activity.
- The playroom was bright, spacious, and well laid out with a variety of defined interest areas.
- Items included a kitchen home corner, a library, constructive area, costumes area, arts and crafts, tuff play tray, cars, trucks, jigsaws, puzzles, blocks, links, animals, musical instruments, sensory lights, black and white boards connectors, threading, peg boards and individual play dough.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids and posters with themes including 'My Family Tree', 'All About Me', 'Winter Time' and 'Sensory Play'.
- The outdoor area was to the front of the service and had artificial grass and a variety of special interest areas. Children were observed to have enjoyed the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing area did not have a self-sealing leak proof pedal bin and may pose as a cross infection safety risk for a preschool child.
2. The pedal bin in the children's sanitary area was broken and missing the lid which may present as a cross infection safety risk for a preschool child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A leak proof self-sealing bin has now been purchased for the service.
2. A new pedal bin has been purchased for the children's sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted for 1 and 2.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed by the inspector and has met the requirements of this part of the regulations.

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 service provided evidence that the 2 adults were trained in first aid responder for children and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box, items were within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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 of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was in 12/12/2023.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated April 2023.
The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 31/01/2022.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for up to 22 preschool children on a sessional basis and was valid until the 27th of March 2024.