

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2022WD001		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Buddies Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Portlaw National School, Connolly Road, Mayfield, Portlaw, Co. Waterford		
<b>Eircode:</b>	X91 V343		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Alice Norris		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/12/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM 6
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Community Care Offices, Cork Road, Waterford City.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Bradshaw		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

Little Buddies is a rural sessional service based in the local primary school in the village of Portlaw. The service is in a self-contained modular building at the rear of the school. This is one of two services owned and operated by the registered provider.

The service is registered to care for up to 22 preschool children aged from 2 to 6 years old and operates two sessional services daily. The operating hours are from 08:45 to 11:45 and 12:00 to 15:00, Monday to Friday.

The children have the use of the public playground nearby.

The service offers school age care also.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs three staff members to work directly with the children. The registered provider stated that they work between both services daily.

### 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 17 – Information for Parent;

Regulation 19 – Health Welfare and Development of child

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child.

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, 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)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. Through discussion with staff there was a clear line management structure in place.

(2)

Following a review of information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, the inspector reviewed four files.

(a)(b) The required validated references were available for all staff.

(c) Garda vetting was available for the four adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) On a review of documentation available police vetting was not required for the staff.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that staff working with preschool children had achieved 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

### 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)(3)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. In the morning, 3 staff members were caring for 16 preschool children. In the afternoon, there was two staff members caring for six preschool children. The registered provider was rostered to work directly with the children.

### 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) Information required under parts (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g) and (h) was available on the day of the inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) Of the 12 child record forms reviewed, 2 did not have written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The registered provider stated that the required parental consent was recorded and going forward a staff member has been assigned the responsibility to ensure all forms are signed.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

### Compliance Information

The service has a comprehensive parental handbook which includes all the required information for parents. This included a curriculum outline, the type of service offered to the children, and the services children's charter.

## 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*

### Compliance Information

On arrival at the service the children were engaged in various activities including group and individual play. Staff explained that at that time of the morning children had the opportunity to choose their own activities. Staff were observed to engage with the children in a positive manner. One staff was noted to ask the children if they wanted to use the timer so they could take turns playing with the superhero figurines. Children, with the help of the staff member, set up the timer and agreed to take turns in their play.

Children's toys and equipment were displayed on low shelving and accessible to children which allowed them to make independent decisions on their play.

Children were not rushed as they ate their snack, staff were observed to chat and sit with the children during this time. Staff were respectful toward the children, and they were reminded that the art activities would be after snack time.

All children participated in the art activities, staff encouraged children to be individualistic when designing their 'melted snowman' and offered positive encouragement and compliments to the children. Staff were observed to communicate effectively between themselves and plan the next stage of the morning once the art activity was finished.

The short-term plans for each week were displayed on the wall and staff described how these are developed using observations of the children's interests.

### 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 entrance to the service is through main yard of the primary school. The door of the modular building was secure preventing any unauthorised person entering the service.

Staff described how parents come to the door of the service each morning and parents pick the children up from the room after the session. This gave staff the opportunity to meet adults individually and give feedback on each child's day.

Attendance records for children and the daily roster and staff attendance records were maintained and completed daily.

Staff described how they use the playground across from the school as it is fully enclosed and a secure space. Emergency contact details were displayed on the wall for easy access in case of an emergency.

### **Infection Control:**

Children were encouraged to wash their hands throughout the morning. For example, a staff member was overheard suggesting to a child to wash their hands once they had completed their activity. The cleaning checklists for the room and the sanitary area was completed, up to date and displayed. There was warm water, soap and disposable paper towels to support effective hand washing.

### **Fire Safety:**

Fire drills were carried out regularly and all evacuation signage was in place in the service.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

### **Infection Control:**

The couch in the children's cosy area had a tear and the foam was evident. This could prevent effective cleaning and may cause a risk of cross infection.

### **Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

### **Infection Control:**

The registered provider stated that all torn couches have been removed from the children's room and a new couch has been purchased. Staff are now aware that if a couch is torn or damaged going forward, it is to be removed immediately.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

### **Infection Control:**

A copy of the delivery confirmation note was submitted to the Inspectorate.

### **Summary Comment**

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.