

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023CC001		
Name of Service:	Tír Na Sí Farm Preschool and Daycare		
Address of Service:	Fermoy Road, Condonstown South, Watergrasshill, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	T56 EF90		
Name of Registered Provider:	Julia McCarthy		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	03/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23x440		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Stokes		
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	N/A		

Description of service

Tír na Sí Farm Preschool & daycare centre is a newly established registered childcare setting, which opened in August 2023 with two care rooms. It is located on an open farm and the setting operates with the ethos of valuing outdoor play, time in nature and caring for farm animals. The setting is registered to operate from 8am to 6pm from Monday to Friday. The setting is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years.

Staffing

The registered provider is service based. There were 4 adults working with the children on the day of inspection, excluding the registered provider. Three of the four adults had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from a Level 5 to a level 8 on the National Framework of qualifications

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider and person in charge were present when the inspector arrived on the premises on the day of the announced inspection. The designated person in charge or the deputy are on the premises at all times of the service operating.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place.
- (2) There were 5 staff files assessed.
- (a) There were 7 references with corresponding written validation on file from past employers in respect of the adults.
- (b) There were 3 validated references on file from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) A completed Garda vetting disclosure was received for the 5 adults.
- (d) Out of jurisdiction vetting records were not on file or required as none of the adults had worked outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) The adults that worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from a Level 5 to a level 8 QQ1 on the National Framework of qualifications. The registered provider and a second adult were awaiting their final award and were supernumerary.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to as follows: In addition, the registered provider was present.

Room (children's age range)	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Charlies Room (aged 2years 8 months up)	Morning 2 Afternoon empty	Morning 13 Afternoon empty
Neddy's Room (aged 2years 8 months up)	Morning 2 (1 staff & 1 supernumerary adult) Afternoon 3 (2 staff & 1 supernumerary adult)	Morning 8 Afternoon 7 (after 1pm)

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that at all times of the service being in operation that a minimum of 2 adults were on the premises as per the staff roster.

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

- Meals and snacks were served at regular intervals during the day and water/drinks were observed to be readily available. Breakfast was served at 8am, snack at 10am, dinner at 12.30pm and snack at 3pm. A late evening meal was available at 4pm. Staff assisted the children as required. Dinner time was observed to be a social occasion where staff engaged with the children and children had the opportunity to self-serve water from a container with a tap to promote their independence.
- Most children were able to access the toilets independently and for those children in pull ups, staff were attentive and sensitive to their needs.
- Staff were attentive to the personal care needs of the children, assisting with cleaning their noses etc.
- Children in both rooms were observed to have access to the outdoor area for mobility on the day of inspection.
- Both rooms had a designated cozy corner for children to rest and relax as required. In addition, the service had individual sleep mats to facilitate rest for children in the afternoon or as necessary during the day.
- There was a calm and engaging atmosphere across the service. Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their sense of safety and security in the setting.
- Good communication between staff was observed.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The registered provider advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents, with an online application to send pictures/ information for the parents.
- The setting had an emphasis on communication in person with parents at handover times and via the daily record which parents were invited to take a picture of at pick up times. This detailed the meals/snacks, activities, sleep etc details of their child's day.

- The setting plans to communicate the observation records of the children’s interests and progress with parents/guardians on a regular basis at handover times and at the planned Halloween party where parents will be invited to attend and sign the individual observations.
- The regular observations on the children will contribute to the emergent curriculum based around the children’s expressed interests. These interests link in with and will inform the activities and themes of the month.
- In addition, a group learning journal was on display in the boot room for parents to access and view at any time.
- The adults were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection, with encouragement and praise for specific tasks in a warm and caring manner for example during tidy up/transition times where nurturing and enthusiastic interactions were observed.

Physical and Material Environment

- Both rooms in operation were child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out in special interest areas with materials largely accessible to the children.
- Interest areas included soft area, library, home corner, Montessori materials, construction and shop, music, dolls and cots and buggies, dress up.
- Pictures of the family wall were at children’s eye level. Childrens artwork was on display at children’s eye level.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available in each room.
- The outdoor area was spacious and had interest areas including, playhouse, climbing, slide, digger sand pit, see-saw, ride on toys and loose parts for construction, carousel swing and, picnic bench etc.
- The outdoors provided daily activities and opportunities for fresh air, discovery, and for children to relax, and it was laid out and equipped to provide challenging and stimulating learning opportunities to enhance all aspects of child development.
- The registered provider advised that 2-3 times a week the children engage in a farm walk to see the animals to provide opportunities to explore, engage and experiment with nature.

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:

- Internal and external doors were secured on the day of inspection.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children. Cleaning equipment was stored in a locked room off the boot room.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was noted to be fully enclosed and secured. The registered provider advised that daily checks of the outdoor space for animal waste are strictly conducted prior to its use.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, thermostatically controlled hot water and paper towels were in place for hand washing/drying.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Handwashing was observed after outdoor play, before children returned inside for their dinner.

Administration of Medication:

- No medications were observed to be administered on the day of inspection.
- Staff were aware of the storage and medical consent and appropriate practices around medicine administration as outlined in conversation with the inspector.
- Anti-febrile medication was observed to be stored and labelled appropriately.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were recorded in writing for each sleeping child by the adults.
- The room temperature was monitored and recorded on the sleep records.
- The sleep records noted the child's breathing, colour and position as required.

Fire Safety:

- No fire safety issues were observed.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.
- Fire drills were conducted monthly.

Outing:

- No outings were observed on the day of inspection

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 the service was adequately insured with insurance for 44 full day care children valid until 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From visual inspection the premises appeared of sound and stable structure, well-finished and weather tight.
- (b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. Appropriate security systems with a magnetic lock at the gate by the front door to manage unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service.
- (c) The service was adequately lit, heated, and ventilated on the day of inspection.
- (d) The service was well maintained, in a proper state of repair and clean on the day of inspection.
- (e) An adequate ratio of toilets and nappy changing was in place for children as a 1 to 11 ratio was in place with 4 children's toilets and sinks. For adults there was 1 adult toilet and sink, with a 1 to 8 ratio in place.

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Pre School

Room	Toilets/changing units	location
Charlies Room	2 sinks, 2 toilets for 22 children	In the hall
Neddy's Room	2 sinks & 2 toilets for 22 children	Off the room (ensuite)
Adult Toilet	1 adult WC & WHB plus nappy changing station	In the hall