

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023CE001
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Laura's Childcare
-------------------------	-------------------

Address of Service:	Knocksaggart, Ballynacally, Ennis, Co. Clare
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	V95 XP77
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Corbett
-------------------------------------	---------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date of Inspection:	20/11/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	9
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	---

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy
----------------------------------	------------

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

Lauras Childcare was established in 2023, in the rural village of Ballynacally, on the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. The programme of care and education is provided for children ranging in age from two to six years, Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 12:30 and 9:30 to 14:00 on a part-time and sessional basis. A school aged childcare is provided each afternoon and during school holidays.

The service moved from the grounds of the local national school to a purposely adapted childcare facility that was converted from commercial use. Care and education is facilitated in one large open plan room in a single storey building. Sanitary facilities for the children, a kitchen and an administrative office are located adjacent to the care room. Staff sanitary accommodation is provided separately in a standalone facility in the outdoor area. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

On the 20 November 2024, the registered provider worked alongside two adults to care for the children in attendance. The registered provider is the owner and provides an administrative role and works 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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4).

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

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. 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, the 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)

The registered provider was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the two adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Six written and validated written references from past employers were available.

- (b)
Not applicable, the references were sourced from past employers.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was not required, as the adults working in the service had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
Three adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 5 and 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 20 November 2024, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the service. Three adults cared for the nine children attending the service in the morning and the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
During the inspection more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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

- (1)(a)
The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and level of development of the children:

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, acknowledged the children by their individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults offered praise and encouragement.

The children were supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the programme of care and education in each room and completed the transitions in activities with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably. The parents/guardians provided the children's food and beverages. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion.

Physical and Material Environment:

One open plan room was in operation during the inspection. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities. The children were observed to be fully engaged as they transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment. The care room was bright, spacious and well-resourced and was laid out to enable the children to freely move and play. Learning aids, visual routines and creative work were displayed on the walls in the care room. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care room included appropriately resourced wooden pretend kitchen, a wooden playhouse, a wooden construction bench, a fire station and a farm area. An area was available with a large seating area and soft furnishings and used by the children to rest and relax. An adjacent bookshelf accommodated a large range of reading materials. Shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children. On arrival the children were engaged in open ended play and educational based activities and transitioned to mealtime and outdoor play.

The outdoor play area which is located to rear of the service was accessed by the children. The designated sections contained spacious, all-weather ground surfaces for opportunities to play all year round. There was a variety of ride on toy vehicles, balance equipment, a slide, a sand table, seating and a pretend playhouse. The children thoroughly enjoyed making snow at the sensory table. All areas were adequately resourced with supporting play materials and equipment.