

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE004		
Name of Service:	The Learning Tree		
Address of Service:	Willouise Park Sallins Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W91TXF6		
Name of Registered Provider:	Paulina Zurawska-Cina		
Service type:	FDC		
Dates of Inspection:	29/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM 17
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7 Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher		
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

The Learning Tree is a new full day care service located in a private residential estate in Sallins that commenced operating in August 2023. A full day care service is provided to children aged between 1-6 years old and opening hours are Monday to Friday from 07:30am-18:00pm. Part time care is offered, and sessional care and education is available for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. There are three pre-school rooms, a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen, staff room and an office provided. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were five staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider. Four staff members were working directly with the children and the registered provider was available to provide support and relief to the care rooms as necessary throughout the day.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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*
- (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)

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

The records of five staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Ten written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of five records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for five employed staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Three members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework. One staff member was in possession of a letter of qualification recognition issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and one staff member was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by the DCEDIY.

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)
There were 17 children attending the service being supervised directly by 4 staff members during the inspection.

The registered provider was available to provide relief as required to the pre-school rooms throughout the day.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

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)

Basic needs of children

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and parents provided the morning snack for their child. The main hot meal is provided by and outside catering company and heated on site daily. The menu plan in place from the catering company was displayed and was varied and nutritionally adequate, the hot meal served was pasta and meatballs. Water was freely available in the pre-school rooms to the children throughout the day.

Children were afforded plenty of time to eat their meals and were not rushed and during conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any foods provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces.

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within all the pre-school rooms and all children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play morning and afternoon. The children were dressed appropriately for outdoor play with waterproof clothes available for each child if the weather was wet.

Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis and more frequently if required.

A sleep room with one standard cot for children aged less than two years was available to facilitate needs led sleep. Low level sleep beds with appropriate bed linen were available for children requiring sleep at a designated time while attending the full day care or part-time services.

Children's behaviour was managed positively with an emphasis on praise and encouragement.

Supporting relationships around children

The children were observed to be content and relaxed within their pre-school rooms.

On the day of the inspection all staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made and soft vocal tones were during all interactions.

Each child attending the service had an individual learning journal with documented observations, photographs and artwork attached that was provided to parents/guardians at various stages throughout the year. Communication with parents was via a closed electronic application that enabled parents to log in and view any aspect of their child's day in real time. The staff also speak with parents at the drop off and collection times.

Physical and material environment

The pre-school room environments provided the children with interesting spaces to play, learn and develop. They were well presented and well-resourced to encourage each child to initiate self-directed activities.

The low-level shelving units in the pre-school rooms ensured that the materials and equipment were freely available to children, enabling free choice of the equipment to support child led play. There were defined areas of interest which included home corners, construction areas, library and rest spaces, mark making with arts and crafts resources, puzzles, jigsaws, shape and colour sorter toys, stacking toys, building bricks and blocks, sensorial trays, small world areas and dress up.

The children's individual artwork was on display in all rooms.

Comfortable rest areas were available in all rooms for children to relax and take a break throughout the day as required.

The outdoor area had an artificial grass surface and was fully enclosed with a high level metal fence and gate to the side. There was an extendable canopy which enabled the children to access the outdoor area if the weather was inclement and provided shade during very sunny weather. Picnic tables with integrated bench seating were in place along with some rockers and further play equipment had been recently purchased including, ride on equipment, an outdoor kitchen and a wooden sand/water unit.

A large wooden climbing frame will be installed in the new year to provide a further area of gross motor and imaginary play, this was supported by documentary evidence of the purchased item.