

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023WW003
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Name of Service:	Little Stars on the Lane
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Address of Service:	1 Seagreen Gate, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 C924
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Watson, Kara Gargolinski McAlister
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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).

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Description of service

This privately owned full day care service opened in November 2023 and operates from a two storey, purpose built premises, located in the outskirts of Greystones in Co. Wicklow. There are three care rooms on the ground floor, two with their own sanitary accommodation, and an additional disability toilet with nappy changing facilities is available on the ground floor.

On the first floor there is a staff room, office, laundry room, kitchen and staff sanitary accommodation. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age, on a full-time basis.

The registered providers operate the full-time service in conjunction with a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) service for 38 weeks, but all children attend on a full-time basis. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are a total of ten staff members who are currently employed in the service, this includes the person in charge, a deputy manager and a full-time chef. Both the person in charge and the deputy manager are supernumerary and available to support staff when needed. Nine staff members were present on the day of inspection, and both registered providers arrived at the service after the inspection had started.

The registered providers are available to support in the care of the children attending the service if the need arises.

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

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- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2), (3), (4) - Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1), (2) - Staffing levels,

Regulation 15 (1)(a)-(i), (3)(c) - Record of a pre-school child,

Regulation 16 (1)(a)(h)-(k), (3) Record in relation to pre-school service,

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,

Regulation 24 (1)(a)(i-iv)(b), (4) – Checking in and out and record of attendance.

Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b)-First Aid,

Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b), (2)(c), (4) - Fire Safety

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 providers, 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

Following a discussion with the person in charge and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that 10 adults work in the service, the registered providers staff files were also included in the review, making a total of 12 adult files reviewed on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)

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The person in charge was present and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the remainder of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of 12 adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for 12 adults.

(d)

International police vetting was available for five adults working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Eleven staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(9)(3)

Five references were validated after the adults had started work in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(9)(3)

All references are now checked and verified and signed off before a staff member commences employment with us. This practice has now been firmed up to ensure all paperwork is completed correctly.

Staff training has been undertaken to ensure all verifications are completed correctly. We have reviewed all HR policies and updated to reflect changes. Once completed, all staff were trained on these changes and updates to ensure all of us follow the correct procedures.

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Supporting documentation submitted

(9)(3)

None submitted.

Summary Comment

The above actions when implemented will address the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 9 (3) and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

On the day of inspection there were six adults working in three care rooms with 29 children present in the morning and 27 in the afternoon. At all times during the inspection, the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained.

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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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The person in charge ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The person in charge ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (h)-(k),

The person in ensured a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The person in charge ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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 main door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspector to the service.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.

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- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route from each care room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all pre-school rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each pre-school room had access to a sanitary area, with toilets, changing tables, running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers and named accordingly, cleaning and storing of soothers was included in the daily cleaning policy of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On the day of inspection, two nappy changes were observed and, on both occasions, protective gloves removal and hand washing were not carried out at the correct times during the procedure. In addition, one child was not cleaned during the nappy changing procedure. It was noted that there was no written guidance or visual nappy changing procedure cues present in the sanitary area for staff to follow.
2. There was no foot pedal operated bin within the sanitary area of the Moon room on the day of inspection.
3. No table cleaning was observed before lunch time in the Moon room. The purple paint the children were using during the morning, was still present on the tables when the children's food was being served.
4. In the Moon room and Sun room, both adults and children were observed to lift the foot pedal operated bin by hand when disposing of used paper towels.
5. At 11.55am an adult in the Sun room was observed letting children who had just washed their hands before mealtime, open the lid of the foot pedal bin with their hands, to dispose of used paper towels.
6. At 12 Midday an adult in the Sun room was observed pushing down the contents of the foot pedal operated bin in the room with their hand, then put on gloves to collect the hot food that was being delivered to the room, without washing their hands between one procedure and the next.
7. The windowsills in both the Sun and Moon rooms were chipped and in need of repair. The wall beside the large window in the Moon room was chipped and needed repainting. These surfaces could not be effectively cleaned for infection control purposes.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

What actions have you taken to **correct** the non-compliance?

Infection Control Points 1-7

All staff have been retrained in our nappy changing procedure, which is updated and on the wall in each room, nappy changing area, staff room and toilets.

We have reviewed our nappy changing policy and procedure to ensure we follow the correct steps and this is on the wall.

We have also created a number of wall reminders for every action required.

We have purchased a new suite of pedal bins for all bathrooms and care rooms.

We have also commissioned stickers from SITE MATE, which are now place on all bins and walls beside bins to remind staff to use the foot only.

All staff have been retrained on use of pedal bins, handwashing, table cleaning and strong infection control practices.

All windowsills and surrounds have been painted and repaired.

We are going also purchasing plastic windowsill covers, to maintain the new paintwork as they are low and children like to sit on them, causing the paint to damage.

Regular spot checks will take place on a weekly basis by managers and owners to ensure the training is being implemented and quality of nappy changing, handwashing, pedal bin usage and table cleaning is being upheld and slippage of good practices does not occur.

New pedal bins to ensure easy opening for our team.

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Repeat training every month.

Purchase of windowsill covers.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Points 1-7

Photographic evidence of new laminated nappy changing instruction, new bins with stickers attached and newly painted windowsills were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above evidence with the reported retraining and proposed additional actions will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 Infection Control points 1-7 and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
The person in charge ensured that all children attending the service were checked in and out on the service register.
- (3)(a)(i-iv)
The person in charge ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people has access to the pre-school service.
- (b)
The person in charge had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school service.
- (4)
The person in charge ensured that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) was retained for a period of one year from the date to which it related.

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)
There were five adults present trained in FAR (first aid response) and were available to the children throughout the inspection.
- (2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within the hallway of the service and in each pre-school room.
- (b)
The first aid boxes were available to the children attending the service at all times.

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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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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)

There was a record of fire drills having taken place in the pre-school service on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on the 11 May 2026.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and the smoke detection system on the premises dated May 2026 and 4 March 2026 respectively.

(2)(c)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire, clearly displayed within the pre-school rooms and throughout the premises.