

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY040
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Name of Service:	Little Feet Childminding
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Address of Service:	Bredagh, Lorrha, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45 DN73
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Name of Registered Provider:	Charlene Duane
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	20/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	2	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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
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Description of service

This service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0-6 years old in a homebased setting. The service is operated from the childminder's home which is located in a rural area in north Tipperary off the road between Birr and Portumna.

The service is registered to operate Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm, for 49 weeks of the year. The service is currently operating between 9am and 2.15pm.

This service works in conjunction with Little Feet Preschool, which is located on the same site across an enclosed courtyard.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service each day that it is operation. A second person, familiar with the operation of the service, is available to call on in the event of an emergency.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(8)(b), 12, 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

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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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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.*

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(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

9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) Not assessed on this inspection as the registered provider's file had been reviewed on previous inspections and found to be compliant.

(4) The registered provider held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 6 and 7 on the national qualifications framework.

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.

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

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were two children, including the childminder's own son, aged 9 months and 2 years old being supervised by the childminder in the morning. In the afternoon, there were 5 children aged between 9 months and 4 years old being supervised by the childminder.

(8)(b) There was a second person available on the site in the morning while the pre-school service was in operation. In the afternoon, there was a second person, living close by and familiar with the service who could be called on in the event of an emergency.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 12 - Childminders

(1) A childminder shall ensure that-

- (a) there are no more than 5 pre-school children in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children,*
- (b) subject to paragraph (2), there are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children, and*
- (c) there is a working telephone on the premises.*

(2) A childminder may have more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time where all such children are siblings of each other.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were no more than five children present in the service at any one time, including the childminder's own child.

(b) On the day of inspection there was only one child aged under 15 months present in the service.

(c) There was a working telephone on the premises.

(2) Not applicable to this service on the day of inspection.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The children had access to the large open living room/dining room/kitchen in the childminders home for indoor play and exploration. In the afternoon the children also had access to the playroom in the building used by Little Feet Preschool.
- The children enjoyed daily outdoor play in the large enclosed outdoor play area in the garden beside the house.
- (b) There were cots available in the bedrooms of the house where the children could sleep during the day when they needed to sleep. The children could rest and relax in the living room during the day.
- (3)(a) The garden at the side of the premises was enclosed by fencing and gates and had a grass surface. The courtyard between the house and the building used by Little Feet Preschool was also fenced and gated. This area had a concrete surface and was suitable for use in all weathers as well as being a good surface on which to use ride-on vehicles.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service was very well equipped with furniture, toys, materials and resources to support the children's play and exploration. There was a family dining table and chairs in the dining room part of the room which could be used by older children for dining and tabletop activities. There was also a small table and child sized chairs as well as a highchair with safety harness and tray table for use by the younger children for mealtimes.

A large storage unit with open shelves for baskets of toys on the top and cupboard space beneath had been purpose built for the living room for storing toys and equipment for use by the children. There were soft furnishings such as coloured floor rugs, cushions and throws for the children to use when relaxing quietly or as construction materials for forts and dens.

Additional resources were stored in a spare room where they could be accessed when needed.

Outdoor resources were shared with the children in Little Feet Preschool and included two play sheds: one with sand and a large home area, the other with tuff tray tables, play kitchen and large construction shapes. There was a post office shop, wooden bridge, large wooden train, wooden stationary car, swing set with one basket and one standard seat, large sand pit and bird feeders hanging from a tree.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Foods eaten in the service on the day of inspection were supplied by the children's parents. The childminder kept a supply of snacks such as yoghurts, cream crackers, rice cakes, cheese and fruit to give to any child who wanted more food than they had brought with them. One of the children who attended in the morning went home at 12.15pm and ate a packed lunch while attending the service.

Four of the children who attended in the afternoon between 12.15 and 2.15pm, had been in Little Feet Preschool in the morning. They brought food to eat during the day that was stored in a fridge until they wanted it.

Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day. Children could have water or milk to drink when they were thirsty.

A bottle making machine was used to make up pre-measured infant formula when required.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The childminder recorded the arrival and departure times of the children in the attendance register.

(3)(a) The childminder ensured that only those who had permission to do so could enter the premises.

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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) The childminder held current certification in first aid response (FAR), valid until 23 January 2026.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box available in the kitchen cupboard.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

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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.
- (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 written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis and smoke alarms were checked during each fire drill.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire displayed on a wall in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider held current insurance for a childminding business valid until 6 January 2025.