

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC225
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Name of service:	Little Fingers Playschool
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Address of service:	30 Elm Drive Shamrock Lawn Douglas Cork
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Name Of registered provider:	Teresa Malone
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Type of service registered:	Sessional	☒	Part-Time	☐	Drop-In	☐
	Full Day Care	☐	Childminding	☐	Temporary	☐

Date of Inspection:	08/09/2022
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Number of pre-school children present:	AM	14	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork T23X440
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Inspection undertaken by:	V.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
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Description of Service	Little Fingers Playschool is a privately operated service that caters for children aged between two and six years. It provides sessional care and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 9am to 12midday. The service operates from rooms situated on the ground floor of the registered provider's private residence. There is one care room, an area serving as a passageway to the outdoor area and two children's toilets. There is an outdoor play area situated to the rear of the premises.
Staffing	There are three adults attached to the service including the registered provider. On the day of the inspection the three adults were on the premises, and all were working 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 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. Inspections 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
- (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 named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required. (b) The registered provider who was the named person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection. (2) There was one new adult employed at the service since the previous inspection carried out on 27 May 2019 and therefore on 08 September 2022 the inspector focussed on this adult's file to assess vetting. (a) There were two references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the adult. (b) Not applicable as all references were from past employers. (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the adult. (d) Not applicable as the adult had not lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more. (4) A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of the adult.
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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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult child ratio exceeded the 1:11 requirement. There were three adults working directly with 14 children on the premises.

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:

- The food for the mid-morning snack was provided to the children by their respective parents/guardians. It was noted during the inspection that the children's snacks consisted of chopped pieces of fruit and vegetables, cheese, sandwiches, wraps, yogurt and drinks of water.
- A supply of suitable crockery and cutlery was available to the children as required at their snack break.
- A jug of water and cups were freely available for any child that was thirsty and required additional fluids.
- The Inspector observed that the independent use of the toilet by the children was encouraged and was supervised by an adult as appropriate.
- Hand washing by the children was encouraged before eating, and after using the toilet, messy play, and outdoor play activities.
- The children were provided with an opportunity to play outside daily.
- Children had sufficient space to move about the care room freely and were able to go to defined interest areas of their choice such as the writing area, the construction play area, the family area, the dolls and farm area, the dress up section, the arts and crafts area, the library, and the rest area.
- The toys, home and play materials were all stored on low shelving or low containers in the care room that facilitated easy access by the children. The registered provider informed the inspector that she regularly rotated the play materials depending on the children's interests. It was noted that there were two storerooms available to store the excess toys and play materials.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- The Key person system was evident in the service which enabled children to form secure relationships with the adults caring for them. There were three adults supporting 14 children on the day of inspection which facilitated individual care to children as required.
- The adults demonstrated warmth and positive regard for the children through use of reassurance, positive interactions and encouraging language.
- Daily opportunities were provided for small group activities by the children such as peg play and tabletop activities and large group activities such as storytelling and singing.
- The adults supported the children to transition into the service easily as was evident by the children chatting together at the rest area and at the tables during the snack break.
- Parents and guardians were welcomed to the service at drop off and collection times.
- A Parent's Handbook was available to all parents and guardians of new children that commenced at the premises.
- The registered provider informed the inspector that parents were provided with opportunities to be involved with the services' activities such as social visits by a nurse, fireman and garda.
- Relevant information was forwarded to parents and guardians by the registered provider via use of a notice board and social media.

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 entrance door leading into the care room was secured by a lock that prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The two storerooms and door leading into the registered provider's private residence were kept secured and were inaccessible to the children.
- The radiators on the premises were fixed high on the walls out of children's reach.
- The ceiling lights on the premises were each provided with a protective cover.
- All cleaning agents were stored on high shelves out of children's reach.
- The outdoor play area was secured by walls, hedging and a secured gate.
- The steps leading up to the second tier of the outdoor play area was fitted with a handrail and secured gates at the top and bottom of the steps respectively.
- Visibility strips were fitted on the glass panelled doors of the care room and the glass door leading out to the outdoor play area.
- The children's bags and coats were stored off the floor on a storage unit.

Infection Control:

- The registered provider informed the inspector that the care room was cleaned daily, and detailed cleaning records were available for review.
- A supply of cleaning agents and equipment was available in the care room.
- A supply of warm water, pedal operated bins, liquid soap, paper towels and hand sanitiser were available in the care room and each of the children's toilet cubicles. The hot water temperature was recorded at 22.9°C.
- All food for the children's snack break was stored in a fridge that was positioned in the care room.

Fire safety:

- The records demonstrated that a fire drill was carried out monthly at the service. The last fire drill was carried out on 06 September 2022.

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 was an adult with up-to-date training in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises.
- (2)
(a) There was a fully equipped first aid box available on a high shelf in the care room stored out of children's reach.
(b) The first aid box was always available on the premises.

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 fire fighting 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) Records of fire drills carried out at the service were available on file. A fire drill was last carried out on 06 September 2022.
 - (b) Records regarding the number, type, and services of fire equipment were maintained on file. The fire equipment was serviced on 01 September 2022 and the wired smoke alarm was serviced on 10 August 2022.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the care room and also available on file.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance information

- (e) There were two toilet cubicles each with a toilet and wash hand basin available for use by the 14 children on the premises. Liquid soap, paper towels, a step up and a pedal operated bin were available in each toilet cubicle. The hot water temperature was recorded at 22.9°C. The registered provider informed the inspector that the service only caters for children that are toilet trained. The toilet for adult use was situated in the registered provider's private residence and disposable individual paper towels were available for hygienic hand drying.