

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR136
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Name of Service:	Little Feat
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Address of Service:	Farranboley House, Clonskeagh Village, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D14 XW22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Darling
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11 January 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley and Fiona Carty
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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 Feat is a full day care service and is located in an urban, residential area of Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. A service is provided to children aged between six months and six years and is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00 hours. The premises operates from the ground floor of a period domestic dwelling which has been purposely adapted for use as an early years service. The service consists of four care rooms and a purpose-built room is also in use to the rear of the premises. A large outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 11 staff members, including a cook and the registered provider who works directly in the service. On the day of inspection, 10 adults were present including the cook and an adult participating in a work placement programme. The registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival to facilitate the inspection.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 25, 26, and 28. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

(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

(2) The service manager confirmed that ten staff had been recruited since the last inspection and the recruitment files for these adults were reviewed.

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for one of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau for the ten adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for six of the adults who required it.

(4) Four of the adults held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. Three of the adults did not require a relevant qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

- There were no references available for three adults from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

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- There was no second reference available for two adults.
- Two references available for four adults and one reference available for two other adults had not been appropriately validated.

(3)

A review of documentation evidenced the registered provider had not taken the required steps to ensure that new recruits were suitable and competent before allowing them access to children as detailed above under (2)(a)(b).

(4)

There was no evidence available to show that three adults working in the service directly supervising the children had achieved a full relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b)

Emails have been forwarded to referees requesting translation to English. Second References now available for two employees, they are validated and on file in staff records. All staff references now validated and filed in relevant staff file.

(3)

Revised checklist for new employees along with induction programme now in place. Validation system for references now in place.

(4)

Translated qualifications for two of the three employees along with confirmation all qualifications are accepted by DECDIY. The third qualification has been sent for translation and is pending.

A telephone reference validation book has been purchased, and a document listing new staff paperwork requirements is now in place. Staff files to be fully completed prior to commencement ensuring all references in English and fully validated.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The actions outlined by the registered provider will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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.*
- (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 were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2)
- The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were thirty-five children present in the service being supervised by 9 adults during the inspection.
- (8)(a)
- The registered provider ensured that two adults were on the premises at all times as evidenced by the staffing roster in place.

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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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
 - (i) A staffing roster was in place in the service detailing staff members hours of work each day which was reflective of the staff members present on the day of inspection.
 - (j) Written records of medication administered to children in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed on the day of inspection documented necessary details, including parental signatures.

Non-Compliance Information

- (k) A sample of records reviewed detailing accidents and incidents involving children while attending the service did not include the parent's/guardian's signature to indicate the information had been shared. This was at variance with the policy and procedure in place in the service and posed a risk to the safe continuity of care of the children on collection from the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

New written procedure is now in place in relation to the completion of accident/incident report books along with staff training. Ensure all new staff are trained in the completion of accident/incident reports during induction training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The actions outlined by the registered provider will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. Staff stated breakfast, snacks, and a hot lunch is provided by the service each day for the children in attendance. Adults used respectful language during interactions with the children and were observed to be responsive to children's individual care needs. Staff used gentle tones whilst speaking to the children at their level and responded promptly to children's cues for care. Babies were observed to be placed to sleep in line with their individual care needs and rest areas were available in each room to enable the children to take time away from the group as desired. Children were supported to be independent in their environment including using the toilet independently and washing hands before meals.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was available to the rear of the premises with a natural bark surfacing. The area was well resourced with a variety of play equipment and materials to support gross motor skills and imaginative play. The four care rooms were amply resourced.

Non-Compliance Information

Drinking water was not accessible to the children attending the Caterpillar and Butterfly room at all times during the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Suitable water jugs have been purchased and accessible to Caterpillar and Butterfly group throughout the day. Maintain fresh water throughout the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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

Inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

Cleaning products and medications were stored safely out of reach of children. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place in the service. Staff confirmed during discussions that exclusion periods following common illnesses were implemented in line with the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members were aware of the procedures in place and a sample of medication records reviewed on the day of inspection were appropriate.

Safe Sleep:

Standard cots were provided for children under two years to sleep. Individual physical checks were recorded on sleeping children every ten minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The protective coverings on a radiator in the Montessori room were broken and hanging off, resulting in the radiator being in reach of and accessible to the children. The radiator was recorded to be 67.4°Celsius during the inspection, posing a risk of burn to a child.
2. Trailing electrical cables were observed hanging down from a high-level socket in reach of the children in the Montessori room posing a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing practices observed on the day of inspection in the service were inadequate for infection control purposes and at variance with the policy and associated procedure in place in the service as follows;
 - Children's hands were not consistently washed following nappy changing.
 - Staff members hands were not consistently washed following nappy changing. One staff member was observed to change four children's nappies with no handwashing in between.

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- Staff members were observed to re-dress children and wipe down the nappy changing mat wearing the soiled gloves used during a nappy change.
- 4. The children's sofa in the rest area of the Butterfly room was torn in parts exposing internal foam which could not be effectively cleaned.
- 5. There were no pedal operated bins in use in the service. The bins in the sanitary areas and the care rooms were observed to be swing lidded and were consistently handled by staff and children during the inspection which is ineffective for infection control purposes and preventing cross contamination.
- 6. There was no warm water available to facilitate handwashing in the Treehouse room, the water was recorded to be 10°Celsius during the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- 7. There was an inadequate monitoring and awareness of safe sleep temperatures observed on the day of inspection which was at contrast to the safe sleep policy in place in the service as follows;
 - The temperature of the sleep room was not recorded on the day of inspection and no temperature recorded device was available in the service to check the temperature of the room. A review of documentation evidence that temperatures had not been recorded in the sleep room in the weeks prior to the inspection.
 - During discussions with the inspectors, staff working with the babies in the service indicated they were not aware of the necessity to take the temperatures of sleep rooms and were unaware that there was a required sleep room temperature of between 16 and 20 °Celsius.
- 8. The temperature of the sleep room was recorded to be 21.7°Celsius during the inspection while two children aged one year were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- 9. During discussions with the inspectors, staff working in the service stated that fire drills are completed once or twice a year and not monthly as required. A staff member stated a fire drill had not been completed in the service since September 2022. This may affect the timely evacuation of children and adults from the service in the event of an emergency.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Radiator in Montessori room has been switched off until maintenance available, second radiator still on enabling suitable temperature in room maintained.
2. Sponge cable organiser has been used to conceal wires and ensure not accessible to children.

Infection Control:

3. New nappy changing procedure and new handwashing policies now in place, along with re-training of staff.
4. Sofa in Butterfly room replaced.
5. Pedal bins in place in sanitary area and all care rooms.
6. Water heater along with timer/temperature control button now available in Treehouse.

Safe Sleep:

7. New sleep logs in place which enables monitoring of temperature to be recorded. The safe sleep policy/procedure has been amended to reflect correct procedures and all staff have read/understand procedure.
8. A digital thermometer has been purchased and placed in sleep room for easy visibility of temperature.

Fire Safety:

9. Fire drill rota now in place. All staff have been re-issued with fire drill policies. Staff have completed an online fire safety awareness course.

More frequent checks will be completed in relation to maintenance. Improved staff induction training will be implemented and ensuring these policies are understood and adhered to. Manager to follow up monthly to ensure fire drills carried out.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The actions outlined by the registered provider will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

A person trained in first aid responder training was not available to the children on the day of inspection as required.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was not stored in a conspicuous location within the service. There was no indication that the box was located within a press in the Butterfly room. During discussions with the inspectors, two staff members stated they were unaware of the location of the box.

(b) Although it is noted that a first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times, the box was not appropriately stocked for the number of children in attendance. The box contained several bandages which were out of date and did not contain any items to appropriately treat a child should they have a cut or graze from a fall.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

Three full time staff have now been enrolled for First Aid Responder Training.

(2)

(a) Signs have been placed on relevant doors indicating location of first aid box.

(b) New first aid boxes, Tusla compliant, have been purchased for main building and Treehouse room.

Contents of first aid box to be assessed/upgraded/items replaced on a 3 monthly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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

- (4)
- The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There were no records available in the service on the day of inspection detailing that fire drills had taken place on the premises. During discussions with the inspectors, staff members stated a fire drill had not been completed in the service since September 2022 and that they are generally only completed once or twice per year.
 - (b) There was no record to show that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system and fire fighting equipment had taken place in the service as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1
- (a) Fire drills are now completed monthly. All staff have been given fire drill training and fire procedures along with training ensuring all staff understand these policies.
 - (b) Records of maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system and firefighting equipment were located and furnished to the inspector, they had been completed in September 2022 and could not be located during the inspection.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the service was insured for the type of service provision and the number of children the service currently accommodates.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

Areas of the service were found to be in need of maintenance and a deep clean on the day of inspection as follows:

1. In the children's sanitary area of the main building, the paint on wooden panels located behind two of the children's toilets was damp and lifting and could not be effectively cleaned.
2. The linoleum flooring throughout the main building and in the purpose built room was heavily stained in parts with areas of black discolouration, indicative of a potential presence of mould.
3. Black mould spores were noted on an area of the skirting board and adjacent wall in the designated sleep room and on the window sill of the Treehouse room of the service posing potential health risks to the children in attendance.
4. Areas of the skirting board in the Butterfly room were heavily stained and appeared damp with painting lifting and chipping from the surface.
5. The panels on the protective radiator covers in the Montessori room were broken and hanging off the frame.
6. The linoleum flooring in the Montessori room had a hole in it exposing the concrete flooring underneath.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service maintenance man has been informed of all items pertaining to Regulation 29 and maintenance of premises.

1. Area of wooden panels in children's bathroom will be tiled to eliminate painting continually peeling.
2. A new linoleum floor as been ordered for Butterfly room and should be in place by 28th February 2023.
3. Walls/windowsill received a deep clean and areas will be repainted where necessary.
4. Skirting boards to be assessed by maintenance and best solution put in place.
5. Radiator switched off until maintenance man arrives by end of week.
6. Maintenance man to replace/fix damaged area of floor in Montessori classroom.

Maintenance list issued and all items to be assessed by 17th February, issuing completion dates.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The corrective actions outlined by the registered provider will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.