

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY042
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Name of Service:	Little Feet
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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:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	25/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
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).

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Description of service

This part-time service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school age care service is also provided. The service operates between 9.15am and 2.15pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour sessional service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a purposely converted building on the grounds of the registered providers residence, from which a registered childminding service is operated. The premises is located in a rural area near the village of Lorrha in north Tipperary. The service consists of a large rectangular activity room with an entrance lobby and adjacent sanitary accommodation area. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area that is directly accessible from the activity room.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but is available in the residential premises to call on when required. The pre-school leader is the person in charge on a daily basis, supported by a second member of staff.

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(c)(4), 11(1)(2), 15(1)(3)(b)(c), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23, 24(1)(3), 25(1)(2) and 26(1)(4).

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, 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*

(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-

- (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.*

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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

(1)(a) The pre-school leader was the person in charge on the day of inspection and the registered provider was the person in charge when the pre-school leader was absent.

(b) A review of the staff roster and attendance register indicated that the pre-school leader or the registered provider were present in the service while it was in operation.

There were no new staff employed in the service since the last inspection February 2024, therefore only the re-vetting of staff was reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(c) The service had a system in place to ensure that all staff and the registered provider were re-vetted on a three-yearly basis in line with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) There were two staff working directly with seven children aged between 3 and 5 years old in the service on the day of inspection. All of the children attended on a sessional basis on the day of inspection.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was 1:4 on the day of inspection which was greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11. The registered provider was also available on site during the inspection and present in the service at times during the morning but was not counted in the adult to child ratio.

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-*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) The completed registration forms of the nine children enrolled in the service were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registration forms contained the required information in writing as detailed under parts (a) – (j) of this regulation.
- (3)(b)(c) The registration forms were available in the service for inspection by an authorised employee or other authorised person.

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;
 - (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
 - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
 - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
 - (e) the facilities available;
 - (f) the opening hours and fees;
 - (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
 - (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.

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(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) The information required to be maintained in writing in the service as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation were available.

(3) The required records were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The staff built routines and processes into the daily programme of care and activities which supported the children towards independence in self-care skills such as changing their shoes and boots, tidying-up after play and meals, using the toilet and washing their hands, caring for their belongings, opening and closing their school bags, lunch boxes and drinking containers.

The staff supported the children to prepare for transitions during the day through verbal cues and visual aids such as sand timers. The staff told the children when there was five minutes to the next transition, such as tidy-up time, then set the timer where the children could see it.

The staff used singing rhymes and verses as teaching tools and repeated them often, with the children joining in. For example, when the children were washing their hands before outdoor play time the staff supervised and assisted each child while singing ‘rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, that’s the thing to do, rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, thumbs and fingers too.’

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The room was very well resourced and laid out with a wide range of quality toys and materials that were kept in good condition. This allowed the children to see what they wanted to play with and to explore the room and the resources according to their own interests. The shelves were clearly labelled so that the children could identify where to put the toys when they were finished with them.

The daily routine and programme was influenced by the children's emerging interests and was responsive to external forces such as weather conditions. The day of the inspection was sunny and warm so the children spent an extended period of time playing outside. The children were also exploring the theme of 'the farm' and all the animals, which guided some of their activities and artwork during the week.

The children and staff sat together at one large table for mealtimes which were relaxed and social experiences for the children. The registered provider and her two young sons joined the group for lunchtime. Relaxing music was played at a low volume to create a calm atmosphere and each child was given as much time as they needed to eat. Children could leave the table and return to playing when they were finished and had tidied up their place.

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 service was located at the back of the site and accessed off a country road and a long lane. The yard in front of the service was gated to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to the car parking area, the lane or the roadway.

The premises was kept secured while it was in operation to prevent any unauthorised access to the service.

The children could access the enclosed outdoor play area directly from their activity room without passing through the entrance door or the yard.

The service had a sun protection policy. On the day of inspection sunscreen and hats were applied before the children went outside and they brought their drink bottles with them so they could have a drink when they needed it. The outdoor play area included two areas of natural shelter from trees as well as two modular buildings

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which allowed for sheltered play in all weathers. On the day of inspection the sand play building was open for the children to use and take shelter from the sun.

Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. Hot water was 32°C on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

The service had an infection control and prevention policy which included a cleaning schedule for the service. Staff practiced 'clean as you go' of table tops and the floor during the morning and were observed cleaning the room and the sanitary accommodation areas when the children had left at the end of the session. The premises, toys, equipment, materials, fixtures and fittings were well maintained and kept in a clean and hygienic condition. The children and staff were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after using the toilet or nappy changing, before eating, after outdoor play and after messy play. Warm and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at the hand-washing sinks in the sanitary accommodation area and at the sink in the kitchenette area of the activity room. Hand washing posters were displayed above-hand washing sinks to remind the children to wash their hands.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being given to a child attending the service.

Fire safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

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.

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Compliance Information

(1) The staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children on a daily basis. Daily attendance of staff and children was recorded in the attendance register.

(3)(a) The staff met all visitors to the service at the entrance door before allowing them access to the service if appropriate.

(b) A written record was maintained of any visitors to the service.

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 registered provider and the pre-school leader held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR).

(2)(a) The first aid box was suitably equipped and stored in a marked cupboard so that it was easy to locate and access when required.

(b) The first aid box was available for use 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 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 15 May 2026.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the service. Annual servicing of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was carried out on 1 April 2026.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in the service.