

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW101							
Name of Service:	Acorns Playschool							
Address of Service:	Eire Og, Greystones GAA Club, Mill Road, Greystones, County Wicklow.							
Email Address:	margaretmccarthyobrien@yahoo.com							
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Margaret O'Brien							
Type of Service Registered:	Sessional		☒					
Date of Inspection:	1	5	0	9	2	0	2	1
No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM		18		PM		N/A	
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.							
Inspection undertaken by:	M Condon							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health Welfare and Development of Child	Safety

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 Acorns is a sessional service which was first established in 2006. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 2 years and 6 months and 6 years of age. The registered provider operates the service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm.
Premises	The service operates from an adapted room located in a GAA club building. The service comprises of one large preschool room, an adjoining storage room and sanitary accommodation. The adults also have access to a kitchen area in the building. The outdoor area is located at the rear of the premises. An indoor hall is available for use in inclement weather.
Staffing	There were 4 adults present on the day of inspection and all 4 adults were working directly with the pre-school children, one of whom was the registered provider. The registered provider was engaged in facilitating the inspection so but also worked directly with the children during this time.
Methodology	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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.
- (6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who—
- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
 - (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date
- (6A is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "
- (6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information:

- (1)(a)
The registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and a named adult was available to deputise if required.
- (b)
The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

	(2)(a) There was one adult employed since the previous inspection. Not applicable as all references were from sources other than past employers. (b) Two written and validated references were available for one adult from reputable sources. (c) The required Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of one adult. (4) Three adults held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for Qualifications. One adult held a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent to a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework for Qualifications. (6)(a) Not applicable as no adult present had signed a retirement declaration. (6)(A) One adult was employed pursuant to the scheme known at the Access and Inclusion Model.
Non-Compliance Information:	(d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning eighteen years of age.
Response from the Registered Provider:	Corrective Action An application has been made for an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC). A copy of the emails sent and received regarding this application is attached. Preventive Action A completed Garda vetting disclosure has been received in relation to the staff member. Evidence submitted A copy of a letter from a police authority stating the processed police vetting will be dispatched by the 06/12/2021.
Summary Comment:	The actions taken and evidence received have been considered by the inspectorate. Regulatory compliance remains outstanding until a copy of the processed police vetting is received to the inspectorate.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information:	The registered provider ensured that the required written policies procedures and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.
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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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) *Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—*
- (c) *a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information:	(1) Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service. (3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were 4 adults employed and present with 18 pre-school children on the day of Inspection. (8)(c) There were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times. The registered provider does not operate the service single-handedly.
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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

Compliance Information:

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- There was a healthy eating policy in place which was evident in the healthy lunch provided by parents. Children had access to drinking water at all times.
- Children were supported and encouraged to be independent with using the toilet but were supervised appropriately. Hand washing following toileting was observed.
- Children were given opportunities to make choices as to which activities they wished to do and were supported in their choice.
- All pre-school children were observed enjoying freedom of movement within their room and in the outdoor area.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The pre-school was a large, bright, well-ventilated room, furnished with low level tables and chairs.
- There was a suitable and comfortable rest area available to the children.
- Toys were within easy reach for all children. They were clean, in good condition, age appropriate and in working order.
- Examples of some of the toys and equipment available were puzzle maps, jigsaws, coloured beads and various building blocks, paints, colouring pencils, transport toys and construction toys.
- A large hall in the premises was available to the children for use in inclement weather. Suitable toys and equipment for gross motor play or for physical activities were stored, but available for use when needed.

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 outdoor play area was fenced in and gated. The main entrance to the premises was secured by a locking device and inter-com system which was inaccessible to the children.
- All cleaning products were stored in a locked cupboard and out of the reach of children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

- The emergency exit route in the pre-school room was clearly marked and free from obstruction.
- Safety devices were on all openable windows.

INFECTION CONTROL:

- The registered provider had updated and extended the infection control policies and procedures in line with the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines. The policies and procedures were extensive and included procedures for dropping off and collecting children, guidance on not attending if symptomatic and what to do in the event of a child or adult developing symptoms while attending the service.
- The pre-school had a sanitary area with three separate toilets. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels available. A foot pedal bin was available for the safe disposal of used paper towels. A wash hand basin was recently installed in the care room to facilitate frequent handwashing.
- Table cleaning was observed prior to going out to the outdoor area.
- Hand washing by adults and children was observed after using the toilet and outdoor play.
- A written cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the pre-school room.
- Hand sanitiser gel was available in the pre-school room and in prominent locations, inside and outside the service.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION:

- Medication was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.
- Temperature reducing medication was available, in date and stored safely.

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) An adult trained in first aid for children was present and immediately available to the pre-school children. (2)(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position next to the pre-school room. (b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school 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) A record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 9th of September 2021. (b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms dated September 2020 and August 2021 respectively. (4) Notices were displayed in conspicuous positions, detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.
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