

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW236
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Name of Service:	Little Explorers Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ashgrove, Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 WF65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ann-Marie O'Connor
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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 sessional service was first established in 2015. The service operates from two pre-school rooms, located on the grounds of the registered providers home in the rural setting of Vallemount Co. Wicklow. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age. The registered provider operates a sessional ECCE service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday. The service has a staggered start time for each room the first group start at 9.10am to 12.10pm and the second group start at 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Staffing

There were three adults present on the day of inspection and all three adults were working directly with the pre-school children, one of whom was the registered provider.

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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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.

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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

Following a discussion with the registered provider it was confirmed that there were no new staff members working in the service since the previous inspection.

(1)(a)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

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(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)

Not applicable.

(4)

Not applicable.

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.

(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)

From 10.30 am there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children for the remainder of the service provision.

(3)

From 10.30am the adult/child ratio was maintained. There were three adults employed and present with 24 children.

(8)(c)

There were two adults on the premises at all times. The registered provider does not operate the service single-handedly.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

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When the inspector arrived at the service at 10.15am there were two adults present with 24 children, the age profile for this service is 2-6 years of age and requires a 1 to 11 adult/child ratio.

(3)

Between 10.15 am and 10.30 am on the day of inspection the adult/child ratios were not maintained. There were two adults present with 24 children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(3)

We will ensure we are not out of ratio in future and will follow the guidelines on our procedures to ensure ratios are maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(3)

Documentation showing how ratios will be maintained and relief staff was submitted with the CAPA form.

Summary Comment

(1)(3)

The above actions will rectify the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 11 Staffing Level (1) and (3). This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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;*

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- (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-

(c) an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and(i)

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The registered provider ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

(4)

The registered provider had evidence that all children's records were kept for a period of two years from the time a child left the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were ten children's files examined on the day of inspection, seven did not contain the date on which the child first attended the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

All child record forms for children will be double checked before being put into the file to ensure that all dates are completed. When child record forms are returned to the service they will be checked and dated correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

(1)(b)

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The above corrective and preventive actions will address the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 15- Record of pre-school child (1)(b). This will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(c)

The registered provider had a copy of the Act on the premises on the day of inspection and it was available to 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-

(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:

- Adults sat with the children during their lunch and conversation was encouraged. Children were given plenty of time to eat their food in a relaxed and unhurried environment.
- Children were supported and encouraged to be independent with toileting 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. Examples of some activities included drawing, painting, playing with dolls, free and imaginative role play.

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- All children were observed enjoying freedom of movement within their rooms and in the outdoor play area.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Low level tables and chairs and low level shelving with equipment and materials, were available and accessible to the children.
- The pre-school rooms were maintained at a comfortable temperature of 21.6 °C. and 22°C.
- Transition between activities was calm and unhurried.
- Children's artwork was displayed on the walls in both pre-school rooms.
- The outdoor area was well equipped with a large bark surfaced area, climbing frames, sand pit, slides, large mud kitchen, mobile cars and tractors, construction toys, shop area, tractor tyres and swings.

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

The Registered Provider had taken measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children, for example:

General Safety:

- All toys were in good condition and the equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- The outdoor area was suitable, safe and secure.
- All cleaning products were stored in a secure area away from the children.
- The main gate to the pre-school was locked on arrival to the service and remained securely closed throughout the inspection, preventing children accessing unsafe areas and restricting unauthorised persons gaining access to the pre-school rooms.
- The emergency exit route in both pre-school rooms were free from obstruction.

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Infection Control:

- An exclusion policy was available for both staff and children stating that a 48-hour requirement is necessary for both adults and children following vomiting and diarrhoea illness.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- There were cleaning schedules displayed and signed up to date in both pre-school rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In pre-school room 1 the radiators in the two sanitary areas had chipped paint work and were rusty, the peeling paint posed a safety risk to children in the pre-school room.
2. An electrical water heater located on the floor beside the sink in the first sanitary area in pre-school room 1 was accessible to children, this posed an electrical risk to children and required to be boxed in.

Infection Control:

1. Foot pedal bins in both pre-school rooms and the sanitary areas were in poor condition with rust and over all damage present to the bins. This is inadequate for safe disposal of waste and infection control purposes.
2. Staff belongings and other equipment were stored in all three sanitary areas. This is inadequate for infection control purposes.
3. There was no hot water present in the two sanitary areas in pre-school room 1. Hot water is required for effective hand washing and infection control purposes.
4. A toilet seat insert was stored on the floor within the first sanitary area of pre-school room 1. This is inadequate for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The radiators have been sanded and re-painted. We will check radiators for rust in the future.
2. The electrical water heater has been boxed in permanently.

Infection Control:

1. The foot pedal bins have been replaced. We will check bins for rust in the future.
2. Staff will no longer hang up coats on the doors of the bathroom. The staff will not store personnel items in the bathroom areas.

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3. Hot water will be available at all times and we will check the temperature of the water with the thermostat.
4. The toilet insert has been removed from the sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA form to evidence how the non-compliances have been addressed.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA form to evidence how the non-compliances have been addressed.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, (General safety and Infection control) have been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
The registered provider ensured that all children attending the service were checked in and out on the service register.
- (3)(a)(i-iv)
The registered provider ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the service.
- (b)
The registered provider had a record in writing, in the form of a visitors' book, of all such persons who accessed the service.
- (4)
The registered provider was able to demonstrate that the visitors book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it related.

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)
A staff member trained in FAR first aid was present and immediately available to the children.
- (2)(a)
The first aid box for children was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in both pre-school rooms.
- (b)
At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 evidence that regular fire drills have taken place within the service. The most recent fire drill took place on the 17th May 2023.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the fire equipment for pre-school service dated October 2022.

(2)(c)

The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed, in the event of a fire, displayed on the wall in both pre-school rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was no current, in date maintenance record of the smoke detection system in the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The smoke detection system has been serviced by a registered electrician. The registered electrician will service the smoke detection system annually.

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Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA form to demonstrate that the non-compliance has been addressed.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(b) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.