

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2021CN002 |
|--------------------------|-------------|

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Little Friends Creche & Montessori |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|

|                            |                                               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Kilcully, Kilcully, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | A82 VP23 |
|-----------------|----------|

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Teresa Leddy |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 25/11/2024 |
|----------------------------|------------|

|                                   |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 29 | PM | 27 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

|                                                 |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | S. Mc Kenna                                                                           |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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).

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not Applicable |
|---------------------------------|----------------|

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Description of service

Little Friends Creche and Montessori located on the outskirts of Ballyjamesduff Co. Cavan commenced operation in 2021. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from an adapted two storey building. There are four pre-school rooms for children use, of which only two are currently in operation. Additionally, two sensory rooms were available for children who would benefit from a change in environment. Other facilities include a kitchen, sanitary facilities (nappy changing area) and a sleep room. There are outdoor play areas for children's use. Car parking is available outside the premises.

### Staffing

The service employs 7 adults. A service manager along with 5 staff, work directly with the children, and one adult is employed for cooking duties. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(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 has a designated person in charge, and a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (2) The staff files for 7 adults were reviewed.
- (a) Thirteen written and validated references from past employers were on file for 7 adults.
- (b) One written and validated reference from a reputable source were on file for 1 adult.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

(d) A review of the employment history for the 7 adults, demonstrated that 2 adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 2 adults was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 6 adults employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification was not required for one adult.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

#### Morning

2 adults cared for 13 children aged 2 years 7 months to 3 years 10 months in ECCE 1 Room.

2 adults cared for 16 children aged 3 years 10 months to 4 years 9 months in ECCE 2 Room.

#### Afternoon

Both care rooms joined at 1pm in the ECCE 2 room, where 3 adults cared for 19 children aged 2 years 7 months to 4 years 9 months.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

While one adult cared for 8 children aged 2 years 7 months to 3 years 10 months in the Sleep Room.

In addition to the above, the person in charge was on cooking duty on the day of inspection and assisted in the care rooms if needed outside of scheduled cooking times.

(8) Following discussion with the person in charge and review of the staff attendance records, it demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises when the service was in operation.

### 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*
- (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

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

##### Basic Needs

A 3-week menu to include breakfast, a hot meal and an afternoon snack is in operation. The food on the day of the inspection was a selection of cereal for breakfast served to 9.15am when required. A hot meal of vegetable soup and potatoes served at 12.30pm, and an afternoon snack of chicken nuggets and spaghetti hoops served at 3.30pm. The children take in their own drinks, and a snack from home for the morning snack which is served 10.30am. The snacks observed contained cheeses, fruit, yogurts, sandwiches, and crackers. The children's drinks were stored on a table in the care rooms, accessible to the children at all times. Snack and meal times were observed to be relaxed, with children given sufficient time to enjoy their food. Where a child did not like the hot meal option an alternative food was provided.

The children were encouraged to be independent at toilet times, with adults close by for support where needed. Nappy changing time occurred at set times and additionally when children's routine required.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

Aprons were available for messy play activities. Children from ECCE 1 Room took part in outdoor play, and were observed to wear coats, hats, and gloves outside. Waterproof clothing and wellie boots were available for all children in both care rooms.

Soothers belonging to younger children were stored in individual containers for use at sleep times.

Rest areas were provided in the care rooms to include soft mats, cushions, and child sized arm chairs. A separate sleep room was provided where the adult was observed to remain with the children to help them to relax, and soft music was played to provide for a restful sleep environment.

The children were observed to have access to all areas within their care rooms at a time of their choosing.

Where minor disagreements were observed among younger children around toys, the adults comforted the upset child and discussed with the children how they should treat their friends nicely and how to share their toys.

### Supporting Relationships

A key worker system was in place. Emerging interest boards were displayed in each care room, with comments on each child's interests recorded. There is minimal staff changeover within the service, and the children demonstrated familiarity with all staff who cared for them.

The adults were observed to be positive role models for the children, demonstrating positive interactions with the children and the adults throughout the daily routine. The adults used soft tones, and supportive words of encouragement during their interactions. Strong team work among staff was evident, with the adults observed to work and communicate well together. The transitions within the daily routine were observed to be smooth, with children supported to work at a pace suitable to their needs and development.

Communication with parents is predominantly face to face at arrival and collection times. A text message service and email are also used.

### Physical And Material Environment

The indoor environments were warm and welcoming. A theme of animals occurred throughout the service. Soft lights, wall murals and artificial plants provided for bright and inviting care rooms. The rooms were laid out to include designated play areas such as a cosy book area, a home play area, role play area to include a "play hospital." Tool benches, garages, cars, small world houses and people were also available. Montessori equipment, table top toys to include threading and jigsaws were presented on low level shelving accessible to the children. Creative art materials to include paper, paint, glue, and sticking items was available in both care rooms. Floor play toys to include push a long trucks and tracks, and a selection of large wooden shapes were

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

observed to be popular play choices in the ECCE 2 room. The children in ECCE 1 room were observed to enjoy a creative activity and a story about robots.

Displays in the care rooms included birthday displays, family photos, and creative art work by the children. The tables and chairs available for children's use were suitable for the age and stage of children in each care room. There are many outdoor areas available to the children. Areas included a large grass area with a poly tunnel, a mud kitchen, and an enclosed gazebo with sand to the rear of the premises. A grass area at the front of the premises with wooden climbing structures, large building blocks, ride on toys and a wooden house with play kitchen inside. An area to the side of the premises has a grass surface with a large wooden tractor and trailer shaped climbing structures. Three additional designated play areas lead directly off three care rooms. These areas were surround by walls or fencing and had a ground surface of artificial grass. Play equipment available included a small house, slides, and selection of ride on toys. The outdoor areas were spacious and provide many opportunities for a change on environment within the outdoors.

### Programme of Activities

The well-resourced care rooms offered much choice to the children, allowing for various levels of play, exploration, and challenge for the children in attendance.

The service had curriculum planning in place which used the children's emerging interests in the planning of activities and play environments within the care room. Records detailed children's current interest in doctors and hospital visits, with a "hospital" area laid out in the ECCE 2 room where children were observed to wear their own individually decorated nurse/doctor hats while caring for the dolls in this area. Emerging interests included robots in ECCE room 1, with the themed planned activities observed on the day of inspection.

The children and adults engaged in songs throughout their daily routine such as at clean up time, circle time and during free play. The children were observed to play in areas of their choosing, with adults supporting the children where needed.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### 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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- The main entrance door was secured upon the inspectors arrival and remained secured throughout the inspection which prevented unauthorised access to the service.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised both indoors and outdoors on the day of the inspection.
- The play equipment, toys, and materials available for the children use were presented in good condition.
- Daily risk assessments were completed up to date for each care room.
- The kitchen remained inaccessible to the children.
- Floor coverings throughout the service were maintained in good repair.
- Storage areas were locked and inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high level shelving, out of the reach of children.
- The fire exits remained free from obstruction throughout the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper towels were available for handwashing.
- Hand washing practises were observed before meal times, after children used the toilet, and after nappy changing procedures.
- The sanitary areas were ventilated through openable windows and mechanical ventilation.
- The tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snack and meal times.
- The children's snacks taken in from home which contained perishable items, were stored in the fridge until snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and completed up to date. The cleanliness throughout the service was to a high standard.

##### Administration of Medication:

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

- The staff outlined the procedure for administering medication, with completed records available for review. Records available included prior consent forms, and daily records completed each day when medication had been administered. The daily records included the child's name, date, time, medication, amount, route, two staff signatures to include a witness, and a parental signature upon collection of their child each day.

### Safe Sleep:

- Although registered to cater for children aged 1 to 6 years the service currently does not cater for children aged under 2 years 6 months. The registered provider and person in charge confirmed that the Wobbler and Toddler rooms are no longer in operation, therefore no sleep facilities for children under 2 years was available.
- A sleep room was available for the use of children aged over 2 years in attendance on a part time and full-time basis. Eight stackable beds with appropriate bed linen were available. Bed linen was laundered in the services laundry room.
- Sleep check records were available and detailed the child's name, colour, position, breathing pattern, room temperature and staff signature at 10-minute intervals. An adult was observed to stay in the sleep room with the children.

## 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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by two in date FAR certificates on file for 2 staff.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises, located in the hallways, stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## 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 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

- (a) A record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 20/11/2024.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 11/04/2024, and the smoke alarms was dated 19/10/2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the walls throughout the building, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 74 pre-school children attending the service on a Full-Time basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.