

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC041
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Name of Service:	Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG
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Address of Service:	Ballyhass, Cecilstown, Mallow, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 AT21
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tadgh Hickey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	41
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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

Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG is a community based early years service registered for full day, part time and sessional care. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey detached building that is located in the rural area of Ballyhass in north Cork. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years, with the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) operating from 9:15 to 12:15 Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year. A school age care service is also available. The registered opening times are between 08:00 and 18:00. The service operates from two floors, with two care rooms and sanitary facilities upstairs and five care rooms and sanitary facilities downstairs. One of the care rooms upstairs is used for school age care. The service also has a kitchen, an office, two sleep rooms, a staff room and staff sanitary facilities. The children have access to a large outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises which is segregated into areas.

Staffing

There are 29 adults attached to the service, including the registered provider, who is not service based. On the day of inspection, 21 were present in the service, including the person in charge, the deputy, the supervisor, the chef, a kitchen assistant and 2 school age care staff members. Fifteen staff were working directly with the children on the day of 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

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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.

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 children, person in charge and staff 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-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*

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- (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 had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.
 - (b) Through a review of the roster, it was determined that a person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
- (2) Twenty-nine adults were attached to the service; through discussion with the person in charge and review of previous inspection information, it was identified that eight new adults were appointed since last inspection. The registered providers file also required review. These nine files were open to inspection. Fourteen Garda vetting disclosures were identified for renewal from previous inspection; these were also open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 18 references required, 13 validated references were from a past employer.
 - (b) Of the 18 references required, 5 validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the nine adults. All required documentation was available and on file for two of the adults.
- (4) Five of the nine adult files reviewed worked directly with the children and four held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications and one held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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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 safe sleep policy was reviewed and contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

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,

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Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The service maintained the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care rooms. The ratio was as follows:

- The Baby room, there was one staff member caring for two children in the morning and one staff member caring for one child in the afternoon who were aged between 7 months and 11 months.
- The Toddler room, there were 4 staff members caring for 10 children in the morning and 2 staff members caring for 6 children in the afternoon who were aged between 2 years 2 months and 2 years and 11 months.
- The Wobbler room, there were 2 staff members caring for 10 children in the morning and 2 staff members caring for 9 children in the afternoon who were aged between 1 and 2 years.
- The Preschool 1 and 2 room, there were 4 staff members caring for 22 children in the morning and 3 staff members caring for 14 children in the afternoon who were aged between 3 and 5 years.
- The Preschool 3 room was closed on the day of inspection.
- The Preschool 4 room, there were 2 staff members caring for 12 children in the morning and 2 staff members caring for 11 children in the afternoon who were aged between 2 and 5 years.
- The Afterschool room was in use on the day of inspection.

(8) (a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the staff roster.

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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
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)(i) The staff roster for the week of inspection and the previous two weeks were requested for review. The rosters outlined the names and start and finish times for the staff members on a daily basis.
- (k) A sample of 10 accident/incident forms were reviewed; these were found to contain all of the particulars required.

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- All food and snacks were provided by the service, and these were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Three menus were observed to be posted on the wall in the Baby room outlining the variety of menu options for different weeks. The menu was also written up in the reception area for parents to view.
- A relaxed unhurried atmosphere was evident at snack time, as the children and staff were observed to interact with one another sitting at the tables.
- Children were observed eating a hot meal which consisted of spaghetti bolognese. Additional servings of food were available to the children if they wished. The younger children were observed to wear bibs.
- Cutlery and crockery were available for the children to use.

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- Staff interacted with the children during snack time and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary. Children in the baby room were assisted with feeding and the children in the Wobbler rooms were encouraged to self-feed.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected during the nappy change. Supervision and assistance were provided for the children who accessed the sanitary facilities.
- On the day of inspection, all the care rooms accessed outdoor play regularly.
- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately with hats and had suncream applied.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care rooms. Examples of this were when children were encouraged to wash their hands, place items in the bin and self-feed.
- Each of the care rooms and outdoor areas were well resourced with play materials to cater for a variety of age-appropriate activities.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of either a couch, mat or cushions in the care rooms. Soft mats were also available in the Baby room.

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 entrance to the service was secured, using a keypad lock and a phone system was used. A glass window from the office allowed staff to observe who was at the door before opening it. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- Windows were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children in the care rooms.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed in the service were in good condition.
- The outdoor area was secured with metal fencing and gates. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- Restrictor devices were in place on blind cords.

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Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children, and they were observed to wash their hands before eating and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's bags were stored off the ground.
- Each care room had access to a refrigerator for the storage of perishable foods.
- Mouthed toys were sterilised after use in the Baby room.
- Pedal operated bins were in use for the disposal of waste.

Administration of medication:

- The staff present on the day informed the inspector that one child was currently being administered medication. Parental consent had been gained for this, and a record of administration was maintained. Temperature reducing medicines were observed to be in date and stored out of reach of the children.

Safe sleep:

- Staff were noted to maintain sleep records. Ten sleep records were reviewed on a digital application and were noted to record children's colour, breathing and position.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets were secured to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe sleep:

The air temperature of the Wobbler sleep room which was used for sleeping children aged between 1 and 2 years was recorded at 24.1°C while two children were sleeping. This exceeds the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children of this age. It is acknowledged that staff placed an extra fan in the room, but temperatures were unable to be reduced to 22.0°C or below. Staff then removed the remaining one child sleeping to an alternative sleep room where temperatures were below 22.0°C.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe sleep:

An air conditioning unit has been installed in the sleep room. All care rooms and sleep rooms now have air conditioning units.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Safe sleep:

Photographic evidence of an air conditioning unit installed and a temperature recording of 19°C received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in the reception area of the service. The inspector was requested to signed in and out from 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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) Six of the adults who worked with the children had completed First Aid Response (FAR) training, with copies of the corresponding certificates available. At least one of these adults was available to the children at all times, during the service's opening hours.
- (2)
- (a) There were five first aid bags checked in the service which were sufficiently stocked and available for use. These were safely stored out of reach of children.
- (b) The first aid supplies were accessible, should they be required.

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) Records of monthly fire drills were maintained on file. It was noted that the most recent fire drill was carried out on 07 July 2026.
- (b) A written list of the of the number and type of firefighting equipment was available. Maintenance records indicated that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 06 October 2025 and the smoke alarm was tested on 31 October 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed on the wall in each care room.