

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC224
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Name of Service:	Little Einsteins Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	The Avenue, Water Park, Carrigaline, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P43 P231
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Name of Registered Provider:	Janice Edwards
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	50
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
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

Little Einsteins Childcare Centre is a privately operated full day care service that is situated in a residential area in the town of Carrigaline. The service provides care to children aged between 0 and 6 years, Monday to Friday. The service is registered to provide care from 8:00am to 6:00pm. The service is also registered to provide school aged care. The service is located in a 2-storey, purpose built, detached building. There are 7 care rooms in total; the Baby room, the Wobbler room, the Toddler room, Playgroup room, Montessori 2, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2. There are 2 sleep rooms for use by children adjacent to the Baby room and the Wobbler Room. There is an outdoor play area provided to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

In total, there are 25 adults employed at the setting. On the day of inspection, there were 14 staff working directly with children and there were 2 kitchen assistants. The registered provider is service based and works alongside the designated deputy person in charge. There were 2 staff members who work solely with school aged children and 5 staff members were on leave.

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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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 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-

- (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*

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(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 registered provider has ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) There were two named deputy persons in charge, both of whom were on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that five new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Four new staff members work directly with the children, and one new cook works in the kitchen. A total of five files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for six staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Seven of the ten required references were available from a past employer and had been validated.

(b) Three of the ten required references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all for all staff. 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 required and available for one member of staff as they had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was not on file for all staff members. Evidence was unavailable for one staff member who worked directly with children.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written response, the registered provider stated that an application has been made to have the staff members qualification recognised. The registered provider stated the staff member will only work with school aged children until the qualification is deemed suitable for work with early years children.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the application to have the qualification recognised was submitted to the inspectorate as evidence along with a statement from the provider that all qualifications would be checked against the list of recognised qualifications in future.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 9 (4) has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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)

The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

(2)

On the day of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations.

The rooms were in operation as follows:

Morning:

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present
Baby Room	Full Day Care	10-12 months	3	1	1
Wobbler Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	6	2	2
Toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-3years	13	3	3
ECCE 1	Sessional	3-4 years	7	1	1
Preschool 1	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-4 years	13	2	2
Montessori 2	Sessional	4-5 years	16	2	3
Preschool 2	Full Day Care/Sessional	4-5 years	16	2	2

Afternoon:

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present
Baby Room	Full Day Care	10-12 months	3	1	1
Wobbler Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	6	2	2
Toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-3years	13	3	3
Preschool 1	Full Day Care	3-4 years	12	2	2
Preschool 2	Full Day Care	4-5 years	16	2	3

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8.

The registered provider has ensured that there was a minimum of two staff at all times on the premises. This was evidenced through the staff roster and discussion with staff on the day.

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:

- The layout of the care rooms supported the children to move freely within their environments, and to actively engage in their chosen tasks. Children in the baby room were observed to be free to move and learn to walk in a safe place.
- There were ample resources available for the children in each care room.
- Children within all the care rooms were observed partaking in outdoor play throughout the day.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly throughout the day and as required by each child. Nappy changing was observed to be respectful, and staff and children were observed chatting during this time.
- Meals and snacks were prepared on the premises by the chef and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Mashed potatoes, beans and chicken were served for dinner, and fruit and yogurt were observed to be served for snack.
- Extra portions were available to the children.
- Suitable cutlery was provided in each care room along with appropriate seating in the form of highchairs, suitable tables and low-level chairs.
- During mealtimes, the staff sat with the children and assisted as required. The children were given sufficient time to enjoy their food, and conversation was encouraged by staff.
- Water was accessible to the children throughout the day in each care room.

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- Children had unrestricted access to the toilets and were seen to access sanitary facilities independently with the supervision of staff.
- The staff were observed to be kind and caring towards the needs of the children in their care. An example of this was when a child in the toddler room became unwell. Staff were quick to offer comfort and redirect the other children.
- The individual sleep needs of young children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals in the baby room.
- Each care room was equipped with a rest area.
- Staff were observed to apply sunblock to children prior to outdoor play on the afternoon of inspection.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- The external doors were secured to restrict unauthorised access in.
- Cleaning agents observed on inspection were stored out of the reach of the children.
- The blind cords observed were secured.
- There were suitable handrails observed on the adequately lit staircases.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off the floor.
- Low level doors and windows were fitted with visibility strips.
- Windows in each care room had been made safe to prevent children from exiting or falling.
- Highchairs in the baby room were in a good condition and had been fitted with safety harnesses.
- Low level storage cupboards were secured with child proof locks.

Infection Control:

- Staff were observed to sanitize tables prior to mealtimes.
- Each sanitary area was fitted with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Perishable food was safely refrigerated.
- Windows were open in the care rooms to aid natural ventilation.

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- It was noted that children washed their hands when returning from outdoor play and from the bathrooms.
- There were detailed cleaning records available for the inspector to review.
- Staff were observed to wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies.
- Cots were fitted with mattress protectors to prevent the spread of infection.
- Nappy changing practices were observed to be in line with the nappy changing procedure displayed in the changing areas. Staff were observed to wear disposable aprons and gloves, sanitize the mats after use, and to wash children's hands as well as their own.
- Sanitary areas observed were fitted with mechanical ventilation.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed on the day. Fever reducing medication was observed to be stored securely and labelled clearly with each child's name.
- Staff stated they were familiar with the procedure to be followed in the event of needing to administer medication and detailed to the inspector the procedure to be followed.

Safe Sleep:

- Frequent checks of sleeping children had been documented and were available for review. At ten-minute intervals, children's breathing, colour and position were physically monitored, as per the requirement for safe sleep practice.
- Cots were maintained in a proper state of repair.
- Cot mattresses were clean and fitted correctly in each cot.
- A minimum space of 50cm had been spaced between each cot.
- Appropriate sleeping equipment was in use for children's age and stage of development.
- Staff were observed to remain in the rooms with sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were kept free and unobstructed on the day of inspection.
- Wall tethered fire extinguishers were available in each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The fence around the perimeter of the outdoor area was in a state of disrepair. It was observed on the day of inspection that there were wooden lats missing and cracked and to the right of the garden, the fence appeared to be subsiding. Though a child could not exit the area, it posed a risk of injury to a child.
2. There was a large volume of broken equipment piled together in an area of the garden. Items included broken bikes, broken ride on toys and broken toys. These items posed a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

3. The service used a bottle preparation machine in the Baby Room. The use of automatic machines to prepare bottles of powdered infant formula is not allowed due to the risk of possible infection.
4. Foot operated pedal bins were not available in all sanitary accommodations. The bins in the Baby and Toddler nappy changing rooms, along with the bin for the bathroom in Preschool two, were touch operated. This increased the risk of cross infection.
5. Barrier creams for children were not labelled individually. It was observed in the Baby changing area that a basket contained three barrier creams with no name labelled on them. This increased the risk of cross infection to children.
6. The adult feeding chair in the baby room was cracked along the edges which could pose a risk of cross infection as the chair could not be cleaned thoroughly.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider stated that they have requested a meeting with the property owner to discuss the necessary repairs.
2. All broken toys were removed from this area.

Infection Control:

3. The machine has now been removed.
4. All bins have now been replaced with foot operated pedal bins.
5. All barrier creams have now been individually labelled and stored.
6. The feeding chair will be reupholstered or replaced.

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Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. No evidence was submitted.
2. A photograph of the cleared area was submitted.

Infection Control:

3. A photograph of the empty storage area where the bottle making machine had been previously stored was submitted.
4. Photographs of new foot operated pedal bins were submitted.
5. Photographs of barrier creams individually labelled and stored were submitted.
6. A statement that all damaged furniture would be immediately removed was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider addresses 5 of the 6 non-compliances identified. The findings documented in point 1 remain non-compliant as the registered provider's response did not provide adequate assurance that the noncompliance had been rectified. This will be assessed at the time of next inspection.

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

(2)(a) (b)

There was a fully equipped first aid box available to each care room, they were stored safely out of reach of children but easily accessible to staff.

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Non-Compliance Information

(1)

The registered provider had not ensured that an adult trained in first aid response (FAR) was accessible to the children at all times. There were six staff members with expired FAR certifications. As evidenced through discussion with staff and through examination of the staff roster, at least one of these persons were available at all times to the children, however, their certifications need to be renewed to mitigate the risk of injury to children who may need first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written response, the registered provider stated that four staff members would be trained in FAR on the 26 September 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of booking for four staff members to undertake FAR training was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 25 (1) remains non-compliant. This will be reassessed at the time of next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured, with insurance for 122 children valid until 27 March 2027. The records detailed the category of service covered, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

- (e)
- Sanitary facilities were suited to the ages and stages of the children attending. There were eight toilets and corresponding hand wash basins available for use by children along with five nappy changing areas.
 - Water was thermostatically controlled within the service.
 - Toilets were adequately partitioned to ensure privacy.