

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE071
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Name of Service:	Leapfrog Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Dun Carraig, Tuamgraney, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V94 XV83
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Ryan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy & J. Hayes
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Leapfrog Creche & Montessori is a privately operated, full day care service, located in the rural village, of Tuamgraney, in County Clare. This childcare facility provides full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged six months to six years Monday to Friday 07:30 to 18:00. A school aged childcare service is provided each afternoon and during school holidays. The programme of care and education is provided in a purpose-built bungalow structure in three care rooms. An enclosed play area is located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

Seven adults are employed by the service. On the 25 August 2026 the registered provider, the assistant manager and four adults worked directly with the children. The registered provider provided an administrative role, relief cover in the care rooms when required and prepared and served the children's food.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

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Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4).

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a).

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a).

Regulation 25- - First aid (1)

Regulation 29-Premises and Facilities (b)(d)(e).

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. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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,*
- (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.*

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(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 was the person in charge, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Two files were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the adult newly employed by the service since the last inspection. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed in respect of the seven adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Four written and validated references from past employers in respect of the registered provider and newly employed adult working in the service were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the seven adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required in respect of the two files reviewed. The adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The adults working directly with the pre-school children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.

(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)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(2)

On the 25 August 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Six adults cared for the twenty-six children attending in the morning and nineteen children in attendance in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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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)

Supporting Relationships around Children:

The adults interacted with the children in a kind and respectful manner. A key person approach was adopted in each care room. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions with the children. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance and comfort, conversed at their level and listened attentively during conversations. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the children's individual preferences and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities and environments in each room were facilitated with ease. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment. Transitions between the indoor and outdoor environments were supported through clear routines and consistent communication. Children were given advance notice before moving between spaces, with the adults using verbal prompts, visual cues and familiar routines to help them understand what was happening next. The adults provided reassurance and individual support where needed, allowing children to move at their own pace

The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time. The children's cues for sleep were responded to in a prompt and calm manner. Speech sounds and language development was promoted by the adults through repetition, songs and rhymes. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably together in a relaxed and unhurried manner. The children's observations and engagement in activities were shared through the electronic application system. The adults discuss the children's day and observations with the parent/guardians during drop off and collection. The adults worked together to plan and facilitate the programme of care and learning.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)
Two adults held a record of up to date First Aid Responder training. The staff roster indicated that the two adults were available on the premises at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(b)
The service was secured by a bell operated system at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility. The outdoor play areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.

(d)
The service was maintained in a clean condition. Completed cleaning schedules were in place throughout the premises.

(e)
An adequate number of children's and adult's sanitary facilities were available in the service. The service accommodates four children's toilets, two adult's toilets and two nappy changing areas. The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and hand paper towels at the wash hand basins.