

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW026
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Name of Service:	Little Trinity Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Montessori School, 17A Chapelstown Gate, Tullow Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 HN53
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Fitzgerald
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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 Trinity Creche and Montessori is a privately owned early years childcare service located on the outskirts of Carlow town. The service offers sessional, part-time and full day childcare services to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service operates from 07:00 to 18:00 hours which includes a sessional service from 09:00 to 12:00 hours. The service is also registered to provide a school age service which operates from a purpose-built wooden cabin to the back of the premises.

The service has four classrooms on the ground floor of the house, as well as a designated sleep room, kitchen area and sanitary facilities. A staff room and office are located on the first floor within the service, while the remainder of the first floor is a private apartment, which is accessed by a separate entrance.

Staffing

There were 12 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider, designated person in charge and a kitchen staff member. All staff members employed in the service to work directly with the preschool children held qualifications from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations: 9 – Management and Recruitment, 11 – Staffing levels, 15 – Record of a pre-school child, 20 – Facilities for rest and play, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First Aid, and 29 – Premises and facilities. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the tweenie, playgroup, junior and senior Montessori rooms.

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.

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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*
- (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)(b)(c) The service manager was the designated person in charge on the inspector's arrival at the service. The registered provider arrived later in the morning as scheduled. A staff display in the lobby provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service.

(2) Through review of records, and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that four staff members had commenced employment since the last inspection and files required examination. To assess compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, six vetting disclosures were also identified as requiring review:

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(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained 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) International police vetting was available for staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent as deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working with the children at all times. There were 21 children with 6 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 26 children with 6 staff members during the afternoon. The manager and registered provider were available throughout the day for cover in rooms as needed.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- The tweenie room, there were 4 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 1 staff.
- The playgroup room, there were 7 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- The junior Montessori room, there were 5 children aged 3 to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- The senior Montessori room, there were 5 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 1 staff.

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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;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (g)(i) Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form was developed by the service and contained all the required information for parents and guardians to complete.

A sample of ten child registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection, and six were completed in full with appropriate declarations signed by parents and guardians.

Non-Compliance Information

(h) Four of the ten records reviewed did not have adequate or up to date information on children's immunisation status. This posed a risk in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have created a vaccination waiver form and have the form on file and have added this to our enrolment forms.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Form

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities available for the numbers of children attending the service. The four early years rooms in use were clean and well organised. There was consideration given to the layout of the rooms, to ensure children could play together in groups or individually. Children's play and learning was supported through defined areas of interest and adequate materials and resources. Rooms had a range of toys and real-life resources to encourage play and learning.

Children could directly access the enclosed outdoor play areas from the playgroup, junior and senior Montessori rooms. On the day of inspection children were observed to play in each of the three enclosed areas. The play spaces were free from hazards and equipment was safe for use by the age groups of children in attendance. The outdoor areas had a range of materials and resources, to encourage active and imaginative play.

(b) There was one sleep room available for use by children requiring cots to sleep. There were five cots and adequate number of low-level beds available to meet the sleep requirements of children in the service. Each room had a dedicated cosy area which was well resourced with cushions, soft matting and blankets. The playgroup and junior Montessori cosy dens were designed to support both rest and play.

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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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were observed to be stored safely and out of reach of children. Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents in the service.

All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Room temperatures were monitored in each room by staff; temperatures were maintained between the required 18°C to 22°C in the early years rooms. All highchairs, tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them, for example small items which may pose a risk of choking were not observed in room occupied by younger children. The outdoor play area was maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

Warm water used by children for handwashing was thermostatically controlled and maintained below 43°C. The temperature was recorded at 39.8°C in the main toilet block.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play and toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service.

Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children and appropriate safe food storage and preparation was observed. Cots and low-level beds were spaced the required 50cm apart. Bed linen was individually assigned to each child and suitable storage was available. Linen was laundered weekly or more regularly if required.

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Administration of Medication:

Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practice for safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each room used for sleep. The temperature in the cot room was regulated by an air conditioning unit. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room. The temperature of the two rooms used for sleep were recorded at 20.3°C and 21.3°C, which was within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not ensure that medications and first aid supplies were replaced in a timely manner once expired. An auto-adrenaline injector, eye washes and bandages were available for use past their expiry, possibly reducing their efficacy should they be required.
2. Records of accidents and incidents in the service were not all completed in full. Of ten records reviewed, three were not signed by parents to confirm they were informed.

Safe Sleep:

3. Two children sleeping on floor beds in the playgroup room were not adequately supervised as staff left the room in between ten-minute checks. Staff members were completing ten-minute checks and had some visibility of children via a viewing panel to the tweenie room. When the inspector queried the practice with the person in charge, a staff member was immediately assigned to the room to supervise. A staff member is required to always be present in the room while children are sleeping on floor beds.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All first aid equipment has been updated. All out of date/expired bandages and eye wash has been removed from our first aid box. The auto-adrenaline injector has been disposed of. We have a new in-date auto-adrenaline injector now in place.

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- The three incident and accident report forms have all been signed by parents. We will ensure that all accident and incident report forms are signed and completed the day of the incident.

Safe Sleep:

- We have assigned a staff member to be present in the playgroup room where the sleep mats are in place during sleep time. To ensure a staff member is always present and assigned to the sleep rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Dates of auto-adrenaline injector.

Safe Sleep:

No evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed. Implementation will be reviewed on 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

(1) There were three staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b) There was a first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises available for the use of the children attending the early years service.

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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-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

The service was maintained to a good standard, and a maintenance plan was in place. Wall and ceiling vents were free from visible dirt. Tiles and fixtures in sanitary accommodation areas were to a suitable standard and tiles in the children's toilet block had been replaced since the last inspection.