

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

OTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL007
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Name of Service:	Bundoran Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Bundoran Retail Park, Station Road, Bundoran, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F94 HF65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise McGrath
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Killeen
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Bundoran Community Childcare is a community run early years' service. The service operates from a purpose-built facility and is located within the retail park in the town of Bundoran, Co. Donegal. The service caters for children aged 0-6 years, operating from 8am to 5:45pm five days per week. There are four care rooms, two sleep rooms, two nappy changing rooms, sanitary accommodation for children and adults, a kitchen, an office, a sensory room and a dining room within the building. An outdoor play area is available to the side and rear of the building. A school age service is also provided.

Staffing

There is a total of 21 adults working in the service, two of whom are employed under the Community Employment (CE)scheme. This is inclusive of the registered provider who works supernumerary in the service and is available to cover breaks, administration staff, a cook and childcare workers.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 1 (a)(b)(c), 2(a)(b)(c)(d), 3, 4, 11(1)(2), 15, 1 (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i), 3, 4, 20, 1(a)22, 23, 26, 1(a)(b), 2(c), 3, 4, 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.*
- (b) The person in charge was present at the childcare facility upon the inspectors unannounced arrival and facilitated the duration of the inspection. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was consistently available at the service, during operational hours.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service. A governance chart displayed the lines of accountability in the service. On discussion with staff members, they were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that three adults had been employed since the previous inspection on the 23 July 2025. Two of the adults worked directly with the children and one was employed under community employment scheme. A total of three files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for eighteen adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Of the six references required five were from a past employee and available for review.

(b) Of the six references required one was from a reputable source and available for review.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three 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 from the police authorities in another state was available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

Non-Compliance Information

9 (4)

The registered provider did not ensure that each employee working directly with the children held at least 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. There was no evidence available to demonstrate that two employees working directly with children held the require qualifications or equivalents.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Both staff members were asked to submit a letter of qualification recognition to the department of Children, Disability and Equality. Both staff have now received the letters recognising their qualifications and they have been submitted for review. Going forward management will ensure that staff members who are being employed have the correct evidence of qualification and or equivalent approved by the Minister before commencement of employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Two letters of qualification recognition submitted for review.
- New pre-employment checklist for new employees submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (4) has been adequately addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(11) (1)

The registered provider did not ensure that the required adult to child ratios were maintained on the day of the inspection. One staff member was caring for six children aged from 14 months- 2 years. Two staff members are required for the number and ages of children present.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Both staff members were asked to submit a letter of qualification recognition to the department of Children, Disability and Equality. Both staff have now received the letters recognising their qualifications and they have been submitted for review. Going forward management ensure that staff members who are being employed have the correct evidence of qualification and or equivalent approved by the Minister before commencement of employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Two letters of qualification recognition submitted for review.
- New pre-employment checklist for new employees submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 11 (1) has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

Twelve records of the preschool children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and details of the child's general practitioner, were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations

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

(20)

(1)(a)

The indoor care rooms provided a variety of facilities for children to play. Defined interest areas included home corners, construction areas, libraries, sensory play areas and spaces for creative activities. Play equipment and materials reflected the ages and stages of development of the children attending. The interest areas are set up to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child. Opportunities for sensory play are provided with kinetic sand and sand tables, which the children have free access. Opportunities for role play and creativity are provided with home corners, dress up areas and construction areas. Children were observed to use building blocks and magnets to create buildings and farms. Fine motor development is facilitated through pin boards, suckers, jigsaws and puzzles. Language development is supported through an extensive library and music.

Enclosed outdoor play areas were accessible directly from the care rooms. Covered areas facilitated outdoor play in varying weather conditions. Facilities included climbing equipment, slides, swings, balancing beams, ride-on toys, sand and water play areas, music stations and wooden play structures. Seating and child-sized picnic tables were also available. Children were observed accessing the outdoor play facilities during the inspection.

(1)(b)

Two designated sleep rooms were available. The first was adjacent to the baby room and contained six standard cots. The second was located across the hall and contained three cots. Floor beds were also available in both sleep rooms. The cots were in good repair. Cot mattresses were firm, clean and appropriately fitted, with waterproof covers. Clean sheets and cellular blankets were available. Space was provided between the cots to allow staff

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

access to the children. Rest areas were available within the care rooms, with couches, soft seating, mats and cushions where children could rest or take a break from activities. Books were available in these areas.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider described balanced meals and snacks were provided each day. This was supported by a review of the four week menu plan, a discussion with staff members and observation of dinner in the service. Breakfast and dinner are provided by the service, and children bring in their afternoon snack in line with the healthy eating policy. On the day of inspection, the main meal was moroccan rice which consisted of curried lamb mince, vegetables and rice. Staff informed the inspector that alternatives meals were provided to accommodate children's food preference. Potatoes, beans and gravy were provided as an alternative. The children were heard requesting additional portions of dinner which was facilitated by staff. Children's food allergies and preferences were catered for, and parents' dietary choices are supported. Water and milk were available during meals and snacks and in the care rooms accessible to the 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:

- On arrival to the service the external doors were secure to prevent an unauthorised person entering the service and children from exiting the service unnoticed.
- The outdoor area was secured with high walls and a bolted gate to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning products used in the service were securely stored to be inaccessible to the pre-school children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Risk assessments on indoor and outdoor play areas were completed daily. There was no evidence of hazards in the indoor or outdoor areas, toys and play equipment appeared in good repair and all electrical flexes and cables were in good condition and out of children's reach.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.

Infection Control:

- The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities were in a clean and hygienic condition. Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary accommodation were available.
- Staff members were observed cleaning play areas and frequently touched surfaces after children's use and prior to snack and dinner time.
- Thermostatically controlled water, soap and hand dryers was readily available to the pre-school children to wash their hands prior to eating, after both toileting and nappy changes. Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks. Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.
- The care rooms and sanitary accommodation was adequately ventilated by way of openable windows or mechanical ventilation in cases where no window was available.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection. On discussion with the staff members, they were knowledgeable about the service medication policy.
- Medication consent forms were in place and administration record templates were available if the service required them. The inspector reviewed a sample of 11 administration of medication records and found that these had been completed in adherence to the service policy.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had two designated sleep room with appropriate cots available to children.
- Sleep checks were observed to occur every ten minutes.
- Standard cots were available for babies under two years of age.
- Stackable floor beds were available for children over two years of age.
- All standard cots had the required waterproof coverings and cellular blankets were provided.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*
- (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 procedure was in place to practice and record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated the 13 July 2026.
- (a) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 01 May 2026.
 - (b) The records for the smoke detection system indicated the last service occurred on 28 July 2026.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) was available and open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (4) On the day of inspection, a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were observed to be displayed in a conspicuous place within the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that on the day of inspection the children were adequately supervised. The supervision was maintained indoors through appropriate staff deployment, clear sight lines and purposeful movement within the room. The staff members remain attentive and responsive ensuring children are supported guided and protected at all times. During outdoor play staff members are strategically positioning to monitor all areas. Staff actively engage with children, manage risk appropriately and ensure that supervision levels remain consistent across the play area. Appropriate supervision was maintained during personal care routines in a manner that respects children's dignity privacy and individual needs while ensuring safety and well-being. At mealtimes the staff members sat alongside the children, supervising, prompting and offering support if necessary. Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes for children in cots and continuous staff supervision for children on floor beds.