

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS112
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Name of Service:	Sunflowers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Ballyowen Lane, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 WF44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynn O'Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate – Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill, Jackie Mayock, Katherina Doyle
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).

Description of service

Sunflowers Childcare is registered to provided full day, part time and sessional education and care for children aged from one to six years of age. A school age service is also provided. The service is privately owned and

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operates from a purposely adapted domestic dwelling in a residential area in Lucan, county Dublin. There are five childcare rooms available, four at ground level and one on the first floor with a designated sleep room. An outdoor play area is available for the children and is located to the rear of the premises. The service operates from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

Twelve staff are employed including two managers and a cleaner. Five staff were allocated to work directly with the children on the day of the inspection and a student was present on a work placement. The designated person in charge and deputy manager were available to assist and cover staff breaks and provide help as needed.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) (a)-(i) Record of 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.

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

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN3885	25/08/2026	A child in the Wobbler room had a recorded nut allergy on their enrolment form. An EpiPen was present in the care room. The staff member caring for the child and the person in charge were unaware an EpiPen had been prescribed. There was no care plan available. This posed a significant risk in the event of an emergency.
Status	The registered provider took immediate corrective actions which were accepted and addressed the Statutory notice. Preventative actions were submitted by the registered provider which were accepted and addressed the statutory notice.	

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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

(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)

- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a person who could deputise to be present at all times of opening.

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- (2) The inspection focused on records for two adults who had been employed since the previous inspection and a file for a student who was present on inspection. In addition, Garda vetting for five staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references. A minimum of two references had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. All references had a record of verification checks carried out.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all three adults. Garda vetting disclosures for five staff had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was not required as none of the adults employed lived outside of Ireland for more than six months as an adult.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing in the service. All documents were dated prior to the adults start dates.
- (4) Two adults employed did not require a childcare care qualification. One of the adults was employed for ancillary duties and the other adult worked only with school age children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) In the Wobbler room one adult observed to be working directly with the children did not have a childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (4) A staff meeting was held on 02/09/2026 and all staff members have been reminded that students are not counted in ratio as they've not received their qualification yet and must not work directly with the children without supervision. Staff and students will be reminded upon their first day working in the classrooms and on appropriate occasions that students are to be supervised at all times. The registered provider has added the following line into our student policy- No student will work directly with the children alone (e.g. Provide nappy cover or put children to bed) but will observe and be supervised at all times.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated student policy.

Summary Comment

The Corrective and Preventive Actions submitted by the registered provider were reviewed by the inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. There were five adults working directly with twenty-six.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) The staff roster provided to the inspectors by the person in charge showed that a minimum of two staff members were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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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.*

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

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 12 child records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The records available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.

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- (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.
- (3) Written records for each preschool child as listed above under (1)(a) - (i) were kept up to date and were available for inspection.

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
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (b)

The inspectors observed children engaging in free play and a range of activities within their individual care rooms and in the outdoor area. Children were actively involved in the daily routine and were allocated age-appropriate responsibilities and jobs. Minor disputes between children were managed positively by staff, who encouraged children to share and supported them in resolving disagreements. Each care room was appropriately laid out with a range of age-appropriate play materials, which were accessible to children from low-level shelving.

Drinking water was visible and readily accessible to children within their rooms. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. A hot meal of macaroni cheese and vegetables was provided at lunchtime. Additional helpings were available, and staff provided an alternative meal for children who did not wish to eat the meal provided. Older children were supported and encouraged to serve themselves. Younger children were seated safely in highchairs during mealtimes. Staff sat at the children's level, encouraged them to feed themselves and provided additional assistance where required. Staff interactions with children were observed to be kind, warm and respectful throughout mealtimes and other care routines.

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Older children were observed using the toilet independently. Children who wore nappies had their nappies changed at routine intervals and promptly when required between scheduled changes.

Children were provided with an opportunity to sleep following dinner. Staff supported children to become comfortable by assisting them to remove outer clothing and providing soothers to children who used them. Older children slept on low-level beds, while younger children were placed in cots for sleep. Staff remained with children who were sleeping and provided appropriate support and throughout the settling routine.

Staff reported an online communication application is used by the service to share information with parents regarding children's daily routines, including diet, nappy changes, sleep and activities.

Staff reported that the service operates an open-door policy and that parents generally drop children to the door; staff communicate with parents at arrival and collection times and share relevant information regarding the child's day.

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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:

Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. The kitchen was not accessible to children. Childproof locks were in place on low level cupboards, and firesafe window restrictors were in place. Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely and not accessible to children.

Infection Control:

The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. Staff kept a daily written record of cleaning completed. The sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. The children in the Junior and Senior preschool rooms were observed to wash their hands before eating. Pedal operated bins were used to manage waste appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

No child was given medicine during the inspection. When spoken to staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to administer medicine safely. A sample of medication records were reviewed and contained details of the medication given, including parental consent, the signatures of the staff member who administered the medication, and the staff member who was present as a witness.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes. A sleep log was available for review, detailing the room temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of the child. The sleep room was maintained at the correct temperature for sleep.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed on the day of inspection. Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN 0101 served.

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1. In the cot room a trailing flex was noted between two cots during sleep time posing a potential safety risk. The inspector alerted the registered provider, who immediately moved the cot and remained in the care room to monitor children.
2. There were no individual care plans available for three children with specific physical and medical needs. This posed a potential risk that staff caring for these children would have insufficient information to support them responding to specific health needs.
3. In the Junior preschool room a drying rack overhung the sleeping area, presenting a potential safety risk while children were sleeping.

Infection Control:

In the Wobbler room hand hygiene practices were observed to be poor, and posed an infection control risk as evidenced by the following:

4. Children were not supported to wash their hands after outdoor play and before eating.
5. Staff did not wash their hands after returning from the outdoor area and before preparing fruit for the morning snack.

In the Wobbler room nappy changing practice was inadequate and posed an infection control risk as evidenced by the following:

6. The staff member was observed changing a child's nappy. After completing the nappy change the staff member did not remove their gloves and proceeded to dress the child and clean the changing mat while wearing the same gloves.
7. Children's hands were not washed after nappy changing. The practices observed were not in accordance with the service's Nappy Changing Policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In the cot room the trailing flex was removed immediately as it was no longer needed. Going forward, any new cables in any room will be tacked to the wall immediately by management. Older cables will be monitored by all staff members and retacked by management as required.
2. All children's enrolment forms were reviewed and any child that required a care plan, one was created and

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completed in conjunction with parents. A clear notice of where these are located in the classroom has been put in place in order for relief and cover staff to easily access them. Upon receiving new enrolment forms, parents will be given a care plan to complete if one is required. Children will not be able to start until the care plan has been completed returned and all necessary medical supplies have been prescribed and received by us.

3. Overhanging rack was removed. Counter space is to be used for art drying instead going forward.

Infection Control:

4. A staff meeting was held on 02/09/2026 and all staff members were reformed of the importance of handwashing for children. Exactly how children are to wash their hands and the timings when children need to wash their hands were reviewed. Ongoing training, reminders and spot checks with staff to ensure children's hands are being washed at all relevant times. A poster informing when hands are to be washed has also been placed in classrooms.

5. A staff meeting was held on 02/09/2026 and all staff members were reformed of the importance of washing their own hands. Exactly how to wash their hands and the timings when they need to wash their hands were reviewed. Ongoing training, reminders and spot checks with staff to ensure their hands are being washed at all relevant times. A poster informing when hands are to be washed has also been placed in classrooms.

6. At a staff meeting, all relevant staff were retrained on our nappy changing policy and the correct nappy changing steps. Ongoing training, reminders and spot checks with staff to ensure their hands are being washed at all relevant times. A poster informing when hands are to be washed has also been placed in classrooms.

7. All staff members were informed at a staff meeting on 02/09/2026 of the importance of handwashing. Exactly how to support the children washing their hands and the timings when they need to wash their hands were recalled. As well as this the nappy changing procedure was demonstrated and everyone reminded to follow the nappy changing procedure step by step as written beside each nappy changing area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic and written evidence including a copy of staff minutes submitted.

Infection Control:

Photographic and written evidence.

Summary Comment

The Corrective and Preventive actions and supporting evidence submitted by the registered provider were reviewed by the inspector and deemed to meet the Regulatory requirement.

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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 inspectors observed the children being supervised at all times. This included when playing indoors and outdoors, when using the sanitary facilities, when eating and when sleeping.