

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY249
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Name of Service:	Sunflowers Montessori & Creche
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Address of Service:	Sunflower Montessori & Creche, Killeroran Rd, Ballygar, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	F42 H272
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Lally
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	22/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and E. Friel.
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

This full day care service is in the village of Ballygar in east County Galway. The service currently offers the option of full day care and part-time care from 8 am to 6 pm and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm from Monday to Friday. The service caters for children aged between 1 and 6 years of age. There are two playrooms known as the Montessori room and the Sunflower room. There is a designated sleep room, sanitary facilities and a large outdoor play area to the rear of the service. There is also a kitchen where a cook prepares food.

Staffing

The service currently employs 13 adults, which includes the manager, 2 school aged adults and a cook.

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.

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

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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 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.

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.*

(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) The registered provider was the person in charge and a manager was available to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The roster indicated that there was a designated person in charge and a deputy in charge while the pre-school children were on the premises.
- (2) Since the last inspection on the 13 August 2025 there were three new adults employed in the service and one adult required garda vetting within the required three years:
 - (a) None of the written and validated references were from past employers.
 - (b) Six of the required six written and validated reference for the three new adults were from sources other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three new adults and for the one adult who required garda vetting renewal. 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 for the three new adults working in the service who had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months.
- (4) One of the new adults works directly with the children had a letter of qualification recognition from Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The remaining two adults did not require childcare qualifications as one adult worked in school age and the other in the kitchen as a cook.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 7 adults working directly with 24 children in the morning and 7 adults working with 24 children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least two adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

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

(15)(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i).

Out of the 42 children registered in the service a sample of 11 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent and accurate.

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The 11 sampled records of children contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was an emergency.

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

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. The morning snack was provided by the parents/guardians and the perishable items were stored in the fridge. The breakfast, hot meal of cottage pie with vegetables and afternoon snack of sandwiches were provided by the service.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Cutlery and plates were given to children during snack times and the hot meal of the day. Younger

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children were encouraged to feed themselves by adults in line with their age and stage of development to promote independence and fine motor skills.

- The children had access to water on a low-level table which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty. When children were playing in the outdoor area, water tables were readily available for children to access when thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Hand washing was observed at appropriate times throughout the day, it was observed prior to snack time, after outdoor play, nappy changing and toileting.
- Each child's privacy and dignity was respected while they toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the designated rest and relaxation area in the playrooms.
- The tables and chairs in the playrooms were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- As the weather was hot there was covered areas available for children to take shelter from the heat of the sun.
- Children were observed at sensory play, imaginary play, playing in large and small groups and in circle time in the outdoor area. The children enjoyed the outdoors riding tricycles, playing together, artwork and messy play.

Supporting Relationships around Children:

- There was a consistent staff team working directly with the children which in turn supported secure relationships for the children.
- The adults demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children as evidenced in the positive use of language and sensitivity to the children.
- The children were given plenty of opportunities to listen to each other and express themselves through asking questions when exploring in the outdoor area.
- The children were provided with opportunities to visit and spend time with their younger siblings at the service e.g. in the outdoor area.
- Each child received appropriate support to enable them to positively interact with other children through small and large group activities.

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- The staff interacted in a positive way with the children e.g. they sat at children's level and maintained good eye contact and communication.
- The service communicated with parents / guardians on the progress of each child e.g. a verbal handover was given each day for each pre-school child at collection time and via the services multimedia application.
- There was an emphasis on team work and good communication was observed throughout the day in relation to supporting each individual child.
- When minor disputes occurred during the day, it was observed that the adults guided children to reflect on their part or role in minor disputes and understand other children's feelings and perspective and to come to a positive solution.

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

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room with three cots. Stackable beds were also available for older children for sleep.
- The service kept 10-minute physical sleep checks on the service multimedia application. Records for sleeping children included the room temperature, position, colour and breathing of the child as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services.
- The designated sleep room temperature was maintained at 19.3 °C. When children over 2 years were put down on stackable beds, 3 in total in the Sunflower playroom, the temperature was maintained between 18 °C and 22 °C. The temperatures were regularly checked throughout the day.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child. All linen provided was clean, dry and stored in sealed labelled containers within the sleep room.
- The service had a new air conditioning unit in the designated sleep room to reduce and maintain the temperatures during the hot weather.

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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.*
- (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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had first aid responder with an in-date certificate rostered on the day.
- (2)(a) The first aid boxes were easily accessible and stored in conspicuous positions in the playrooms.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available while the children were attending the pre-school service.

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

During the inspection the area manager, manager and staff ensured that the preschool children were adequately supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments.

The adult child ratio was maintained in each playroom and in the outdoor play area. This was evidenced by the staff roster and observations by the inspectors on the day.

To reduce the risk of a child leaving the service unsupervised the service had implemented a head count before going out to the outdoor area and a check prior to returning to the playrooms. This was to ensure that all children were accounted for in the outdoor area.

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It was observed on the day that the staff ensured that children were supervised during sleep, mealtimes, in the playrooms, in the outdoor play area, while children used the sanitary areas and during nappy changing. The staff were observed to supervise children by sound and by sight.