

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY006				
Name of Service:	Little Voyagers Childcare				
Address of Service:	Ardfert Community Centre, Ardfert, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 H0FE				
Name of Registered Provider:	Hilary Tobin				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	15/07/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>18</td> <td>PM</td> <td>None</td> </tr> </table>	AM	18	PM	None
AM	18	PM	None		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy				
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 Voyagers childcare is a community-based service in the rural village of Ardfert, County Kerry. It is registered to provide full day care, part-time and sessional care, catering for children between the age of 0 to 6 years. The service operates between the hours of 07.30 am and 6.00 pm Monday to Friday. Currently the children attending the service are over the age of 1 year.

The premise consists of 3 playrooms, namely the Rainbow, Butterfly & Bee and the Pre-school rooms. The Pre-school room is located on the first floor. The sanitary accommodation for the children is located within each of the playrooms. The children have access to a small designated outdoor play area located at the side of the building, a grassed area located outside of the building and a community playground nearby. In addition, the spacious hall in the centre is available to the children at allocated times during the week.

Staffing

There are a total of 17 staff employed in the service, 15 Early Years Practitioners and 1 staff member on a community employment (C.E) scheme. The registered provider is not service based.

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

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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 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, 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*

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(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 had ensured that there was a designated person in charge and named persons who were able to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge as well as the deputy person in charge were on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that 6 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. A total of 6 files were reviewed.

In addition, Garda vetting for 5 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Eight of the twelve required references were available from a past employer and six references had been validated.

(b) Four of the twelve required references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 6 new staff members. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting with a verified translation was available for 1 staff member.

(4) Records demonstrated that 4 staff members working directly with children had a minimum of Level 5 and above in Early Childhood Education and Care qualification as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. The fifth new staff member was employed under the C.E scheme and did not require a childcare qualification.

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Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a) Two references on file were not validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The reference checks have now been completed in respect of the findings.

Supporting documentation submitted

One validation for a reference on file.

One reference from a past employer dated 21.7.'26 and a record of validation.

Summary Comment

All documentation received was examined. The requirement for the regulation has been met.

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) At the time of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with children.

(2) The minimum ratios were maintained at all times throughout the hours of operation on the day of the inspection.

The required adult to child ratios were observed in each of the care rooms as follows:

Butterfly & Bee room

There were 3 staff caring for 7 children aged between 2 and 3 years attending on a part-time basis.

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Pre-school room

There were 3 staff caring for 11 children aged between 3 years and 5 years attending on a part-time basis. The children attached to this room were not using the care room on the day of the inspection. They spent time in the community playground and the remainder of their time in the spacious indoor hall until the service closed at 2pm.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 staff members were on the premises during the hours of operation.

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) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 10 children registered as attending the service. There were 9 records assessed that had the required details as listed (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (g), (h).

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Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (f) The 10 records assessed did have the details of any illness, allergy, or special need but did not include details of any disability for children.
- (i) One record did not have written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (f) The registration forms currently in use have been updated to include the wording “disability”. Additional spacing has been inserted on each page of the registration forms to ensure all questions are seen and answered.
- (i) The form has been signed by the parent to give the consent.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (f) A photograph of a recent completed registration form, inclusive of details on any disability. Proof of purchase for pre-formatted children’s registration forms that will be completed going forward.
- (i) A photograph of the one record with completed parental consent.

Summary Comment

All documentation received was examined. The requirement for the regulation has been met.

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*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- The playroom and the spacious indoor hall in use on inspection were spacious, bright and airy. They provided children the opportunity to move about freely and explore their environment independently.
- The toys and play materials supplied were stored on low level open shelving in the playroom. This supported children to readily and independently access them, offering continuous choice.
- The children from the pre-school room that played in the hall had toys and play materials supplied from their playroom, such as painting supplies with the protective aprons, a kitchen area with supporting utensils, obstacle courses set up and soft balls.
- There were tables and chairs in the hall for the children's use.
- There was a rest area provided in the Butterfly & Bee room that consisted of soft vinyl seating to facilitate children to rest/relax or opt out of an activity.
- In the outdoor area, the children played with sand in the sand table and with dried pasta in a tuff tray.
- The children attending had access to their drink's bottles available to them throughout the session. The inspector observed the staff members encouraged the children to take drinks regularly as observed in the hall and in the Butterfly & Bee room.
- The children in the Butterfly & Bee room had the opportunity to play between the indoor and outdoor area during the session.
- The children were observed to be dressed appropriately whilst playing in the indoor and in the outdoor areas.
- The children had sunscreen applied and wore sunhats while playing outside as observed in the Butterfly & Bee room.
- In conversation with the staff in the creche and observed on inspection, nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required.
- During the mealtime observed in the Butterfly & Bee room the staff sat with the children, promoting social interactions and assisting with feeding as was required.
- The parents provide all the food for the children attending.
- On inspection, a staff member prepared and plated the food for the snack in the kitchen and brought it to the care room.

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- The food provided at the snack time included sandwiches, buttered brown soda bread, cheese, crackers, and a variety of fruit.
- The staff were observed to be kind, attentive and sensitive to the children's individual needs.

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 inspection the internal doors leading to the playroom and the hall were maintained secure, preventing children leaving unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access in.
- The cables observed were out of reach of the children.
- The cleaning agents observed were stored out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The children's toiletries were noted to be individually labelled.
- There was a supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels at the sinks in use on inspection.
- Lidded pedal bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The nappy changing station in use on inspection in the Butterfly & Bee room was equipped with a clean and intact nappy changing mat.
- There was a lidded, sealed and foot operated bin in use for the hygienic disposal of nappies.
- The windows and door to the enclosed outdoor play area were open at intervals during the day in the Butterfly & Bee room, to provide natural ventilation. In addition, an electric fan was in operation in the room.
- Children were observed to wash their hands with assistance provided by the staff for example after playing in the outdoor play area and before the snack times.
- Childre's perishable food items were re-frigerated to prevent food spoilage.

Administration of Medication:

- The inspector was informed that no child in attendance on the day of the inspection was in receipt of medication.

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Safe Sleep:

- The inspector observed children slept in the designated area of the Butterfly & bee room during the inspection.
- They slept on the low level, individually labelled beds.
- The designated area was separate from the play area. The lights were turned off, the blinds were closed and the windows open to create a relaxed, comfortable and ambient environment for the children to rest.
- There was a staff member allocated to stay with the children resting at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One emergency exit door in the hall had a low-level push bar device for opening it. The alarm on the door to alert staff in the event a child opened it was not in working order. This posed a risk to children as the door opened out to the side of the building onto the roadway.
2. There were baby wipes accessible on the low-level shelving of the nappy changing unit in the sanitary accommodation in the Butterfly & Bee room posing a risk of injury to children.
3. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seventeen adults attached to the service that required it. However, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EY-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

4. The inspector observed a child did not wash their hands after nappy changing, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The alarm has been fixed, the batteries were required to be replaced. The fire alarms in the hall are included in the risk assessments to ensure they are checked daily.
2. All baby wipes have been removed from the low-level shelving and a dedicated space on a high-level shelf has been allocated to store the wipes.
3. The Garda vetting was obtained. The service aims to compile a spreadsheet for Garda vetting renewal dates for the staff and directors in the service.

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Infection Control:

- The staff were informed of the requirement to wash children's hands following completion of nappy changing. The nappy changing policy has been updated to reflect this step of handwashing. The policy has been read and signed off on by the staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A video demonstrating the alarm on the fire door is in working order. A copy of the completed risk assessment for the hall.
- A photograph of the lower shelving in the nappy changing unit without baby wipes in storage.
- The Garda vetting disclosure required for the one adult.

Infection Control:

- A copy of the updated nappy changing policy and a copy of the record signed off by the staff in respect of the nappy changing policy.

Summary Comment

All documentation and video evidence was reviewed. The requirement for the regulation has been met.

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) There was certification on file demonstrating that one staff member attached to the service had current First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
The registered provider had not ensured that an adult trained in first aid response (FAR) was accessible to the children at all times. There were two staff members with expired FAR certificates. As evidenced through discussion with the person in charge and through examination of the staff roster, the person with the valid certification was not available for the duration of the opening hours of the service. This posed a risk to children who may require first aid treatment.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

One staff member completed FAR on 28/8/'26. FAR training is booked for 3 staff members to ensure a staff member trained in FAR is onsite at all times. Additional staff members will complete training as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of 2 weeks staff rosters demonstrating a staff member is in the service for the duration of the opening hours.

The FAR certification for the staff member who completed it on 28/8/'26.

Summary Comment

All documentation has been examined. The requirement for the regulation has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place. The service was insured to provide full day care for a maximum of 115 children, and the policy was valid until 27 March 2027.