

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH081
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Name of Service:	Redeemer Creche & Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Ashling Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 D296
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mandy Stevenson
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader
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

The Redeemer Crèche and Playgroup is a community-based service, managed by a voluntary committee and in operation since 1991. The service provides Full day care, Part- time and Sessional care to Pre-school children aged 6 months to 6 years. The maximum number of children that be accommodated is 68 and the service operates from 8.30am – 5pm.

The service operates from a purpose-built childcare facility within a residential area of Dundalk town. There is off-street parking available for parental drop off and collection. There are 5 care rooms in operation namely The Baby Room, the Waddler Room, The Toddler Room and during the summer months the Playgroup Rooms 1 & 2 are named Summer Group Rooms 1 & 2. Ancillary accommodation consists of 2 dedicated sleep rooms off the Baby Room and Waddler Room, sanitary facilities, storage areas, a kitchen, a reception area and office space. The children have access to 2 separate enclosed outdoor play areas on the premises.

Staffing

There were 22 employed staff in the service which included the following:

- The registered provider who attends the service intermittently.
- 17 childcare staff who work directly with the preschool children and this includes the designated person in charge.
- 3 ancillary staff members who carry out catering, administrative and cleaning duties.
- 1 staff member who is engaged on a community work programme.

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

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- 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following rooms; The Baby and Waddler Rooms, the Toddler Room and Summer Group Room 2.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN2382	21/07/2026	Adequate documentary evidence of International police vetting and associated translation documents was not available for 1 staff member.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice. The provider submitted a written response together with supporting	

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evidence of the corrective and preventative actions taken which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

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.*

(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 designated person in charge, and two named persons to deputise in their absence.

(b) The person in charge and deputy was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10.00am.

(2) Following a discussion with the person in charge and a review of the staff rosters, it was confirmed to the inspectors that there are currently 22 members of staff employed in the service, including the registered provider, childcare staff, ancillary staff and staff enrolled on a community work scheme.

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(a)&(b)

The following documents were presented for inspection and reviewed:

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for each of the 22 members of staff.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for the registered provider and 22 members of staff. The documents reviewed demonstrated that the registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A review of the employment history for each member of staff, demonstrated that 6 staff had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. International police vetting and associated translation documents was presented for inspection and met regulatory compliance for 5 of the 6 staff members.

(4) Sufficient documentary evidence was available to confirm that the registered provider and 17 childcare staff who work directly with the preschool children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN2382 served.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) Throughout the inspection there were 5 rooms in operation namely the Baby and Waddler Rooms located on the ground Floor and The Toddler Room and Summer Group Rooms 1 & 2 located on the first floor.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspectors arrived unannounced to the service;

- **The Baby Room:**

There were 3 preschool children aged 1 year- 1 year 5 months with 2 members of staff.

- **The Waddler Room:**

There were 4 preschool children aged 1 year – 1 year 10 months cared for by 2 members of staff.

- **The Toddler Room:**

There were 4 preschool children aged 2 years - 2 years and 3 months with 2 members of staff.

- **Summer Group Room 1:**

There were 17 preschool children aged 3-4 years with 3 members of staff. One additional member of staff who is enrolled on a community work scheme was also present in this room

- **Summer Group Room 2:**

There were 17 preschool children aged 3-4 years with 3 members of staff.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records, this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

There were 5 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection, namely; The Baby and Waddler Rooms located on the ground Floor and The Toddler Room and Summer Group Rooms 1 & 2 which are located on the first floor.

A sampling process was used and as a result the Baby, Waddler, Toddler and Summer Group 2 Rooms are the subject of inspection under Regulation 19.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children from all rooms had free movement in the care rooms and had periods of time outside.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting and step ups were provided. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.
- Nappies were checked and changed on a regular basis with pleasant interactions between staff and children observed. Singing songs and conversations about family were observed during nappy changing.
- Attention was given to personal care in all rooms such as nose blowing and cleaning and the use of bibs in the Baby and Waddler Rooms. Handwashing was also encouraged after being outside and before lunchtime.
- Child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service. The staff followed the children's routines and were also alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping at various intervals in the sleep rooms.

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- Snack and mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and unrushed. Staff were observed to sit with the children engaging in conversations at appropriate times, and while children were eating their food the staff sat with them and supported them where needed. All morning and afternoon snacks were provided by the parents, with perishable items being stored appropriately in the fridge. The dinners which were also brought in from home were re-heated by staff in the kitchen.
- Potable drinking water was available for the children to access in all rooms. Bottles of 'cow's' milk and infant formula bottles that had been prepared at home by the parents were stored appropriately in the fridge.
- Individual plans were observed for children who required additional supports and staff were able to discuss plans in place for these children.
- Transitions between activities were smooth and minor behavioural issues were dealt with swiftly and did not escalate.

(3) In all care rooms children's behaviour was managed in a positive way. The staff were observed to engage respectfully with the children in their care. The atmosphere in the care rooms was calm. Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as speaking to the child softly and promoting turn taking and sharing, *"you are ok...."* The children were encouraged and supported to complete tasks for example *"...go...1,2, good strength...good....you are down...you did it..", " go.....go..yeah...you are so strong....."* and *"thank you so much for good listening"*.

Challenging behaviour when presented was dealt with in a calm and caring manner. Staff members got down to the children's level and encouraged the child to look at them. The staff member acknowledged the issues for example by saying *"I see that you are upset can you tell me what is wrong?"*. The children responded well to distraction, re-direction and timers were used to assist with turn taking or disagreements over toys.

The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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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-

(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)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in all the rooms, with soft seating, soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest during the day. A play tent with soft cushions was also available in both the Baby and Waddler rooms to allow a child to take a break from activities during the day
- There were 2 separate cot rooms in the service for the children aged less than 2 years to access ; one off the Baby room which contained 5 standard cots and the 2nd cot room was located off the Waddler room and contained 5 standard cots. The sleep rooms were quiet and restful. All cots and mattresses reviewed were in good condition, fitted appropriately and met the required safety standards.
- A number of stackable day beds were available in the service for children aged over 2 years of age, should an older child require a rest or sleep.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years' service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

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- The outdoor play areas located to the rear and side of the premises were gated and secured with fencing and secured gates to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.
- Low level chairs were observed in use during feeding time with safety harness also in use.
- All blind cords observed were restricted or inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence of daily/ weekly risk assessments in the care rooms and outdoor areas was available and the staff when questioned were aware of who carries out the assessments.

Safe Sleep:

- Physical safe sleep observations were observed being carried out at the required 10-minute intervals by the staff member who was present in the Baby room. This staff member was also observed to take remedial actions when she observed that the sleep room temperature had elevated slightly.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

Infection Control:

The pedal operated nappy bin in the nappy changing area off the Toddler Room was broken and did not work. Staff had to use their hands to open it. This is a cross contamination and infection control risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

The damaged pedal bin was replaced immediately. A full inspection of all other pedal bins throughout the service was also completed to ensure they were in good working order. Notices have been displayed reminding staff to check bins daily and to report any faults or issues to management immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of pedal operated bin and receipt of purchase.

Photographic evidence of notices

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance, together with documentary and photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted, the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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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 registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. Six 'FAR' certificates were available for inspection and reviewed.

(2)(a)and(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was stored safely on the premises.