

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK075
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Name of Service:	Future Heroes Childcare
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Address of Service:	The Mews, Ballinacurra House, Ballinacurra, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 EA29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Fitzgerald, Niamh Hannon
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	02/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Future Heroes is a privately owned childcare facility situated close to Limerick City Centre. Operating from Monday to Friday between 7.30 am and 6.30 pm, the service specifically accommodates children between the ages of 2 and 6 years old. Additionally, the centre provides a dedicated afternoon programme for school-aged children. The infrastructure comprises three distinct pre-school rooms alongside an on-site outdoor play facility for daily activities.

Staffing

The facility is owned and managed by two full-time directors who serve as the registered providers. There are an additional 12 staff members employed at the facility. All staff working with preschool children are qualified in Early Childhood Care and Education. Additionally, the team includes staff who have completed the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) training programme, equipping the facility with the specialised expertise required to support and enhance the inclusion of children with additional needs.

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

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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.

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

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN	02/07/2026	Evidence of Garda vetting was not available for 1 staff member on the premises on the day of the inspection.
Status	03/07/2026 Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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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) On the day of the inspection the registered providers were the designated people in charge of operating the service and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if needed.

(b) During the period of the inspection, both registered providers were present on the premises. The staff roster indicated that a person in charge was always available on site.

All staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted,

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(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for all staff employed by the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references submitted from reputable sources, such as previous schools and colleges attended.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for 14 of the 15 staff employed at the service.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the staff members at the service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(9)(2)(c) There was 1 staff member employed at the facility who did not have the required Garda vetting completed. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notices IAN 3001.

(9)(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(9)(2)(c) The staff present without the required Garda vetting left the service and returned when all vetting procedures were completed.

(9)(3) The services revised their recruitment policy to ensure that procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required Garda vetting was submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered providers ensured that at all times the correct number of qualified adults were available to care for the number of preschool children in attendance.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 20 pre-school children present with 4 qualified staff on the premises. There were 8 children between the ages of 2 and 3 years and 12 children aged over 3 years. The adult/child ratio was correct.

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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

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

The service actively promoted healthy eating by preparing nutritious hot meals and snacks fresh daily, which staff then served to the individual rooms. Children attending the full-day care service received breakfast, lunch, dinner, and an afternoon snack, while parents supplied a healthy morning snack that staff stored in a refrigerator until required. On the day of the inspection, the dinner menu featured a bolognaise and pasta meal.

Sanitary accommodation was situated adjacent to the Caterpillar room with nappy changing facilities also available if required. To foster independence and support organised access, the service provided clearly labelled individual spaces and coat hooks for each child's belongings. Full-day care children over the age of two had access to a separate sleep room in the building, where they were provided with low-level sleep mats with pillows and blankets. This room was also used as a sensory room if needed and when required it offered a relaxed quiet space away from more active general play areas. Children also had access to a well-equipped outdoor playground, where a sheltered area ensured they could access the outdoor space in all weather conditions.

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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:

The front door of the facility was secure and locked, and a staff member was required to facilitate access to all entering the building. A magnetic lock was fitted to the gate in the outdoor playground ensuring no unauthorised access to or exit from the area.

All emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was clearly identified in the outdoor area.

All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners. No broken toys were noted on the premises or in the outdoor play areas.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The service did not have hot water at each individual handwashing basin, and low water pressure restricted the flow in all taps to a slow trickle. This prevented children from thoroughly washing their hands during the day, which directly compromised hygiene standards and created an infection risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

New taps were purchased for all sinks at the facility to ensure hot water was available at all times at all wash hand basins. Regular checks of water temperature and water pressure were included in a daily check of all bathrooms at the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Copies of receipts for all equipment purchased were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate. The revised copies of routine maintenance checks were also submitted.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

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) There was a staff member working at the service that had the required first aid responder training course completed, and their certificate was in date until November 2027. A refresher course for all staff was scheduled for July 2026

(2)(a) A first aid box stocked with all the necessary materials was stored in an easily accessible location in the preschool.

(b) The first aid box was at all times available to the children at the service close to all internal and external play areas.

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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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 13th of June 2026.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment was available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed in August 2025. All smoke alarms were serviced in July 2026.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for a maximum of 55 preschool children to attend the service for a full day care preschool service. The commencement date of the policy was the 28th of March 2026, and the expiry date was the 27th of March 2027.