

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018KK504
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Name of Service:	Little Sunshine's Day Nursery
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Address of Service:	Mullinabro, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	X91N243
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Hayes
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office, Cork Road, Waterford City
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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 Sunshine's Day Nursery is based in the townland of Mullinabro, Co Kilkenny. The service is registered to accommodate 32 pre-school children aged 1 – 6 years. It operates from 7.30am to 5.45pm Monday to Friday and provides a full-day care, part-time and a sessional service.

The service is located in a purpose-built premises. There are two care rooms, the Little Stars (1-3 years) and Shooting Stars (2-5 years). There is one sleep room adjoining the Little Stars room. Both care rooms have adjoining sanitary and nappy changing areas. There is an outdoor area adjoining the service which also includes a sheltered area at the side of the building.

The service also runs a school age care service which is registered separately.

Staffing

The service employs ten staff, including the registered provider, to work directly with the children. On the day of inspection, there were seven staff working directly with the children, including the person in charge.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

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Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15: Record of Pre-School Child

Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials;

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety;

Regulation 27 – Supervision.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 and regulation 23.

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.

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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*

(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)(b)

Through discussion with the staff, and a review of the roster and staff sign in sheets it was determined that the registered provider or the person in charge is always on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)

It was determined that three new staff had been employed since the last inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframe as outlines in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlines under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was not required for the three staff as they had not resided outside the jurisdiction for six months or more as an adult.

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(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

The registered provider had not completed all necessary checks prior to employing staff. There was no evidence that the references for three new recruits had been verified.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that some staff folders were stored in a locked cabinet and the deputy manager did not have access to it. They have submitted the required documents, and staff files will be accessible going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required documents was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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.

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Compliance Information

(1)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 7 staff caring for 31 preschool children. On a review of the children's attendance records and the staff sign in and out sheets, it was determined the registered provider ensured the minimum number of staff are available to the children.

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

A sample of 12 children's enrolment forms completed by parents was reviewed as part of the inspection process. These were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There were two care rooms in the service, the Little Stars room (1-3 years) and Shooting Stars room (2-5 years). Each room reflected the age and stage of the children attending and the equipment was varied and well maintained. The size of the furniture in the rooms reflected were suitable for the children using them. Adults were noted to sit at the children's level during mealtimes and engage in conversation.

The Little Stars room had a low partition which created two defined spaces in the room. The children's tables and dining area was in one area with the other space used for floor activities and construction play. The dedicated sleep room was adjacent to this room with three cots and space for low beds if required.

The Shooting Stars room was U shaped with a large play space, a quiet area and a space with the tables for tabletop activities and dining. Floor coverings created a sense of defined spaces.

The layout of the rooms allowed children access toys and materials independently with shallow baskets and containers on open shelving. A mirror was positioned at the children's level, and they stood at it when cleaning their faces after eating. The care rooms had personalised touches that included family photos, birthday walls, and individually named hooks for children to hang their coats and bags on. Staff in the Shooting Stars room explained that the children's work, which was normally displayed, was sent home the previous week as part of the children's graduation ceremony. Children's drinks were stored on low shelving so they could access them at any time.

The outdoor play area was at the front of the premises, and this area was fully enclosed with an all-weather soft surface. There was a large wooden castle structure with ladders, turrets, slides and spaces to hide.

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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 main entrance was secured on the inspector's arrival and managed with a keypad and magnetic lock to reduce the risk of unauthorised entry or exit.
- Cleaning products were stored on high shelving.
- Children did not have access to the services kitchen.
- Twelve accident and incident reports were reviewed and completed as per the service policy.
- The outdoor area of the service was fully enclosed.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, soap, and paper towels were available at each of the hand basins in the service.
- Children were encouraged to wash their hands and faces after playing outdoors, before and after eating.
- Nappy changed practices were in line with the services nappy changing policy.
- Up to date and completed cleaning record sheets were available to the inspector.
- Cots and low beds were placed 50cm apart to prevent a risk of cross infection.
- Soothers were stored in individual containers.

Administration of Medication:

- The inspector reviewed 12 medication administration permission forms; these were fully completed as per the service policy.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room temperature was maintained within the required guidelines.
- Sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes and recorded.
- Staff stayed in the sleep rooms until the children drifted off the sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for three staff; however, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

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Infection Control:

- The children's couches in both care rooms and the nappy changing mat were torn with the foam visible.
This prevented them being effectively cleaned thus creating a risk of cross infection

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The registered provider stated that they had got the timeframe wrong for the re-vetting process. They have since renewed Garda vetting for all staff so all re-vetting will be required at the same set time every three years.

Infection Control:

- The registered provider stated that they have purchased new sofas, and a new changing mat. Staff are now required to remove any equipment they determine as a risk of cross infection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence of renewed Garda vetting was submitted.

Infection Control:

A copy of the order of new equipment was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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

- Seven staff members had up to date first aid training to the level of a first responder and were available to the children at all times.

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(2) The first aid kit was stored in the office and was conspicuous and accessible if required.

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.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Fire drills were carried out monthly and recorded. The last two fire drills were recorded on the 16 June 2026 and the 29 May 2026.
- (4) The evacuation procedures were displayed prominently in both care rooms. The notice in the older children's room displayed visuals to allow the children understand the procedure.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) There was no evidence available on the day to demonstrate that there was a record of the number, type and maintenance documents of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The person in charge verbally stated that the fire equipment had recently been serviced due to an upgrade of the system.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the fire system had been updated recently and the certificate was in a plastic pocket on the locker. The registered provider has since displayed it in the main hallway.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the certificate was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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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 service has ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified, had extensive experience. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The layout of equipment and furniture in the rooms allowed staff the to monitor children's activities during the morning. Staff were observed to place themselves the care rooms where they could see and hear the children. For example, one staff was observed to sit with a child during snack time and chat, however they were also noted to look around the room and check in with other children if they felt they required help or support.

The rooms had large windows between the rooms and main hallway to allow staff sight of all the children and of one another if support was required.

Staff in the outdoor area were observed to stand at different points in the play space. This made them available to children and between the ream they could monitor all the children's' play.

The staff observations of the children's activities and progression of learning was evidenced in the children's end of years scrap books and the Aistear Record book which demonstrated planned an unplanned activities which the children had participated in.