

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DL004
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Name of Service:	Laugh and Learn Childcare
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Address of Service:	Foyleside, Tromaty, Quigley's Point, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 KHH1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carrie Orr
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	24/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92
Inspection undertaken by:	N Toner
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

Laugh and Learn Childcare is a privately owned and operated early years' service situated in an area off a caravan park on the shores of Lough Foyle in north Donegal. The service currently provides full day care from 8.00am to 6.30pm. The service caters for children aged 0-6 years and is also registered to provide a school age service. The service operates from a dedicated converted section of a single-story building and includes two indoor playrooms, a kitchenette, a sleep room, an office and sanitary facilities. An additional standalone single story prefabricated unit is located on the site of the preschool. The building is directly accessed from the outdoor play area and contains one large care room and sanitary accommodation for children. Children attending the service have access to five outdoor play areas including an outdoor sheltered area, a cycle/running area and a garden area and a large polytunnel.

Staffing

A total of 14 adults were working in the service including the registered provider and one adult employed to work in the kitchen. There were two students in the service on the day of inspection. The registered provider was present for the inspection and worked directly with the children.

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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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4), 15, 20, 19(1)(a), 23, 26(1)(2)(4) and 27.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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 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, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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) The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on the inspection and through discussion with the registered provider onsite, it was determined that three new adults had been employed since

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the last inspection which included two students. The references on file for 11 staff were compliant upon the service's last inspection; therefore, they were not reviewed upon this inspection.

Of the three new adults employed the following was available on file;

- (a) Two written, validated references from past employers.
- (b) Four written, validated references from reputable sources in the absence of past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting for all new adults was reviewed and found to be compliant. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 14 adults including the two students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A review of files revealed that no adult had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months, international police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was reviewed on the last inspection on 11 of December 2024 for 11 childcare staff. Upon this inspection, of the three new adults reviewed, one of the three required, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications the other two adults were students.

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) On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

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(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained throughout the inspection as follows:

In the morning

Baby Room – Two staff cared for 7 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Toddlers Room – Two staff cared for 10 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Preschool Room – Five adults cared for 16 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon

Baby Room – Two staff cared for 4 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Toddler Room – Two staff cared for 6 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Preschool Room – Three adults cared for 12 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

(8) (a) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that two adults were always present on the premises.

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.*

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(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i) Ten records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day.

Compliance Information

Three rooms were in operation in the service, and all three rooms were designed to capture the imagination of the preschool child and encourage participation and play. Each room is focussed on the age and stage of the child's development with size appropriate furniture throughout the service. Opportunities for all types of play are supported in the service. Imaginary and role play are supported through home corners and activities, dress up areas, construction areas with building blocks, cars and trucks. Sensory play is supported through wall sensory boards for younger children, including sand trays and water trays for sensory play. Language development is supported through libraries in all rooms. Creativity is provided in arts and crafts, and all rooms and hallways are decorated with evidence of the children's artwork. Outdoor areas are equipped with ride on toys, footballs, climbing frames, swings and slides and provide an alternative environment for the preschool child. Opportunities for risky play and gross motor skill development are provided.

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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 service was secured by way of gates at each entrance point. Each gate was restricted by bolts which were not accessible to the children.
- The main building entrance was secure and locked upon the inspector's arrival at the service.
- Highchairs were in good condition and fitted with five-point safety harnesses.
- Cleaning agents were stored securely out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured via fencing to prevent a child from leaving the service unsupervised.
- The hot water provided at the children's wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature below 43°C for hand washing.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand-washing facilities were provided in the children toilets with warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly, including before mealtimes, following using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff interviewed in the service were aware of the medication policy and how to administer and record medications required.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were carried out every ten minutes, and a record of checks was maintained.
- The temperature in the baby sleep room on the day of inspection was 17.8° Celsius.
- In the preschool full day care room, children over the age of two slept on stackable beds. The temperature in this room on the day of inspection was 22° Celsius.
- At sleep time the children's stackable beds were positioned with the recommended 50cm apart.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drill records were in place and conducted monthly

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Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. A designated emergency exit had a locking mechanism fitted which restricted fast evacuation in an emergency, posing a risk of safety to the preschool children. Once this was brought to the attention of the registered provider the locking mechanism was disengaged and subsequently removed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

1. The registered provider has removed the locking mechanism from the fire door. The registered provider will ensure that no locks will be placed on fire doors moving forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

Photographic evidence has been submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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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.*
- (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) Evidence was available for review showing that fire drills were taking place in the service. The last fire drill took place on 14 of July 2026.
- (b) A list of all firefighting equipment with the most recent maintenance date of 01 September 2025 was available within the service.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in a conspicuous location throughout the preschool service for safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

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 registered provider ensured that the preschool children attending the service were adequately supervised. In the care rooms, good communication was observed between the supervising staff, ensuring that each staff were informed of who was leaving the room and what children they were bringing. Head counts were observed to be completed transitioning from inside to outside. In the outdoors the staff members positioned themselves to ensure all children were in view while playing outdoors. At mealtimes the staff members sat alongside the older children offering support if required. During sleep time in the toddler room, staff members sat supervising the children as they slept. The younger children room, sleep supervision was completed by physical checks every ten minutes.