

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC031
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Name of Service:	Baby Talk Childcare
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Address of Service:	Gleann Alainn, Ballygarvan, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 H268
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork, T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Baby Talk Childcare is a privately owned service that is registered to provide full day, part time care, sessional care and Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) to children aged between 1 and 6 years. Baby Talk Childcare is situated in a residential area and has use of rooms located on the ground floor of a 2-storey commercial building. There are 2 care rooms in use, namely the Toddler room and the Preschool room, each with their own sanitary accommodations. There is an outdoor area located off the preschool room. Opening hours are between 8am and 6pm.

Staffing

On the day of inspection, there were 11 adults associated with the service, which included seven staff all working directly with the children. There were three students associated with the service, two of whom were in attendance on the day of inspection. The registered provider was also on the premises and remained office 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/ 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 provider, 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*

(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 named person in charge who was the registered provider and a deputy that could deputise as required.
- (b) The named deputy was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises. The registered provider arrived at the service within 15 minutes of the commencement of the inspection and remained office based and available to the inspector for the remainder of the inspection.
- (2) A total of 11 recruitment files were reviewed. Three of the files related to students.
- (a) Fifteen of the 22 required written and validated references on file were from past employers.
- (b) Seven of the 22 references had been provided by sources other than previous employers and had been validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 11 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting had been acquired in respect of three of the adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (4) All staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification was not required for the students associated with the service.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the following policy was reviewed and was deemed to meet the required standards of this regulation:

- Policy on administration of medication.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation in each care room.

On the morning of inspection in the preschool room, there were four staff working directly with 18 children of preschool age. In the afternoon, there were four adults working with 16 preschool aged children.

In the toddler room, there were three staff working directly with nine children aged between 1.11years and 2.4years in the morning. In the afternoon, there were eight children in attendance with the same three adults.

There was also a student, in each room, who was supernumerary.

(8) The registered provider had ensured that there was always a minimum of two people on the premises. This was evidenced by the staff roster available in the service.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge advised that a total of 36 children were enrolled at the service. A sample of 12 child record forms were assessed. Each form included all of the information, as listed from (a) to (i), which met the requirement.

(3)(c) All 36 records were available for inspection by an authorised person on the day of inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was maintained of the following information:

(j) Details of medication given to any child. There were a total of 13 records of administration of medicine for the current programme year. All records had been signed by staff and parents in line with the services policy.

(k) Details of any incident of accident. There were a total of 8 accidents and two incidents recorded for the current year. Each record had been signed by and shared with parents.

(3) The registered provider has ensured that these records were available in the service and were open to the inspector on the day of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider has ensured that adequate and suitable food is always available to the children. It was noted that the parents provide all food to the service. Through conversation with staff, it was noted that breakfast is available to children who arrive early in the morning. A mid-morning snack is then available at 10:00hrs and a

hot lunch is given at 12:00hrs. A small snack is given at 14:00hrs with the last snack of the day provided at 16:00hrs.

Spacing the food across the day in such a way is in line with guidance on nutrition standards from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Examples of food observed throughout the day were also in line with the above guidance. For example:

- At snack time, the inspector observed children eating yogurts, crackers, cheese and fruit.
- At lunch time the inspector observed children eating spaghetti bolognaise, pasta, chicken and broccoli.
- The evening snack could be seen stored in the fridge and many of the children had sandwiches and wraps.

The children had access to water at all times throughout the day and the children in the toddler room were observed to have milk.

It was noted that there was a supply of crackers and cereal available should any child have forgotten lunch and it was reported to the inspector that children are free to have food and drinks outside of prescribed meal times.

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 wash hand basins throughout the premises were provided with thermostatically controlled warm water. The water temperatures at the wash hand basins were recorded between 31.9°C and 35.6°C.
- Cleaning agents in the care rooms and the nappy changing area were observed to be stored on high-level shelves, out of the children's reach.
- Electrical flexes were stored out of reach of the children.
- Low-level doors were fitted with visibility strips.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to children.
- The highchairs in the Toddler room were fitted with safety harnesses.
- Staff belongings were stored in a secure cupboard making them inaccessible to children.
- The outdoor play area was secured by fencing and a secure gate.
- The main entrance door leading into the premises was secured and prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.

- Blind cords had been secured throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- In the nappy changing area, individually labelled storage was provided for the children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams.
- Windows in both care rooms remained open throughout the day to promote natural ventilation.
- Play equipment, floors and surfaces appeared clean throughout the setting.
- Pedal operated bins were in use in each room.
- The adults and children's sanitary areas were provided with liquid soap, paper towels, warm running water and pedal bins.
- Staff were observed to sanitise tables before and after eating.
- A supply of disposable gloves and aprons were available to staff in the nappy changing area.
- Perishable food was observed to be refrigerated.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff reported that there was currently no children attending who need medication, but all staff were aware of the policy to be followed.
- A supply of temperature reducing medication was stored in high cupboard. Each bottle was stored in its original container and labelled clearly with the child's name.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a staff member physically checked each sleeping child every ten minutes.
- An electronic record was in use with the ability to record each child's breathing, position and colour during sleep.
- Younger children were placed to sleep in suitable cots.
- Cots had been spaced appropriately.
- The temperature in the cot room was recorded at 21°C during sleep time.
- Staff remained in the room with children not in cots to ensure supervision and ratios were maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction.
- Wall mounted firefighting equipment was available in each room.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- The cots in use in the sleep room were not fitted with waterproof mattresses, or a waterproof mattress protectors, as required to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that equipment used for sleep did not fully align with Tusla's Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months. It is acknowledged that upon bringing this to the attention of the registered provider, an invoice for the purchase of more suitable sleep equipment was produced.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider will ensure that each mattress will be fitted with a mattress protector.

Safe Sleep:

The registered provider will ensure that children will use the correct sleep equipment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

The registered provider has submitted evidence of the purchase of mattress protectors.

Safe Sleep:

The registered provider has submitted evidence of the purchase of stackable beds along with floor beds.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider relating to the non-compliances were reviewed and deemed to mitigate the risks associated with Regulation 23, Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The non-compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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. The registered provider has ensured that a record has been kept in respect of
 - (a) Monthly fire drills, the last recorded fire drill for the service took place on 19th February 2026 and
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance records for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms for the service. It was noted that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm were last serviced in December 2025.
2. These records were present and available to the inspector for review.
4. A notice of the fire evacuation procedure, along with a visual schedule for the children, was displayed prominently within each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The services insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of children covered daily which was 32. The start date, which was 28 March 2025, the end date, which was 27 March 2026. The certificate also stated the category of service covered which was Full day care service and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding, contents, public liability and fire and theft cover.