

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC041
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Name of Service:	Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG
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Address of Service:	Ballyhass, Cecilstown, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 AT21
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tadgh Hickey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	61
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 5DDY
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG is a community service providing full day care, part-time and sessional services. It is registered to accommodate children aged from 0 to 6 years of age and children currently attending are aged from 6 months to 5 years of age. Operating hours are from 8.00 am until 6.00 pm, 48 weeks of the year and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is facilitated from 9.15 am until 12.15 pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. A school age care service is in operation.

The service operates from a two-storey, purpose built childcare facility which is located in the rural area of Ballyhass in North Cork. It has a total of seven care rooms, five of which are located on the ground floor namely; Babies, Wobblers, Toddlers, Pre-school 1 & 2 and Pre-school 3. There are also two dedicated sleep areas on this floor along with the main kitchen. There are two care rooms located on the upper floor namely; Pre-school 4 and the school age care room, and a staff room. Staff and children's sanitary facilities are located on both floors. The outdoor environment offers four separate play areas.

Staffing

There are a total of twenty-eight staff employed by the service including three AIM Support Workers, two school age care staff, three kitchen staff, one administrator/relief early years educator and a maintenance person. On the day of inspection nineteen staff were working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 and safety. 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 manager, deputy, 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)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and two deputies assigned to the service. The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived and one of the deputies arrived on site, at an appointed time, as indicated on the staff roster.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that either the designated person in charge and or one or both deputies were on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and all rooms had room leaders. Staff were aware of roles and responsibilities.

(2) Recruitment files for all 28 adults were reviewed;

- (a) (b) There were 38 validated references from previous employers and 18 validated references from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 28 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting time frames as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) International police vetting was available for four of the six adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Twenty-two staff members, including the relief early years educator/administrator, who work directly with the children hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The remaining staff; two school age care, three kitchen and one maintenance worker did not require childcare qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

- (1) Verified translation for one adult's international police vetting, into English, was unavailable.
- (2) International police vetting was unavailable for one adult for whom it was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the manager;

(2) (d)

- (1) Verified translation of international police vetting is now on file for the adult for whom it was required.
- (2) International police vetting has been applied for and a risk assessment has been carried out.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (d)

- (1) Verified translation of international police vetting was received in the office of the inspectorate for one adult for whom it was required.
- (2) The statement from the manager has been accepted and a copy of the risk assessment was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (2) (d) have been addressed. International police vetting will be reviewed on the next 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.

(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 attending the early years service.

(2) The adult/child ratios were met.

There were six care rooms in operation on the day of inspection.

Babies (6 months – 18 months)

There were five full day and one part-time child in attendance with two adults in the morning and seven children in attendance with two adults in the afternoon.

Wobblers (12 months – 24 months)

There were six full day care, two part-time and two sessional children in attendance with two staff members in the morning and eight children with two staff members in the afternoon.

Toddlers (2 years to 3 years)

There were fifteen full day care and one part-time child in attendance with three staff members in the morning and ten child asleep in the Toddler room with two staff members, and six children playing outdoors with one staff member in the afternoon.

Pre-school 1 & 2 (2 years 8 months – 5 years)

There were thirteen full day care and three sessional children in attendance in the morning with three staff members and there were twenty-three children (six children from Pre-school 3, seventeen children from Pre-school 1 and 2) in attendance with three staff members in the afternoon

Pre-school 3 (2 years 8 months – 5 years)

There were six full day care and four sessional children in attendance with two staff members in the morning.

Pre-school 4 (2 years 6 months – 5 years)

There were 12 full day care and four sessional children in attendance with three adults in the morning and seven children in attendance with one adult in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The staff roster confirmed that there were two adults on the premises at all times.

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:

(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.

(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)
- (f) An individual medical plan along with specific medication was available for one child for whom it was required.
- (3)
- (c) The record was available for the inspector to view in the service.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*

(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)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the manager, deputies and all staff were available in the staff recruitment files available in the service.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide was available on the Tusla certificate displayed in reception area of the service.
 - (c), (d) (e) & (f) Adults/child ratios, type of care programme, facilities available, opening hours and fees were available in General Information document provided to parents/guardians on enrolment.
 - (g) The policies, procedures and statements required under Regulation 10 were available on digital format.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each early years child was recorded in the attendance records available in each care room.

(i) Details of daily staff rosters were presented to the inspector on arrival.

(3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review in the service by the inspector.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- All meals and snacks, which had been prepared on the premises by the chef, were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Breakfast, served between 8.00 am and 9.00 was available in the morning. Snacks, including brown scones and fruit, were observed being served in the Wobbler care room in the morning at 10.30 am along with cream cheese and crackers in the afternoon served between 2.30 pm 3.00 pm. A further snack was available between 4.00 pm and 4.30 pm. A hot meal, part of the requirement for a full care service, was observed being served in the Baby care room at 12.10 pm which consisted of macaroni cheese with mashed potato and carrot. Children who were sleeping at this time, were facilitated with a hot meal when they woke up.
- Water was readily available from jugs and cups in each care room throughout the day and milk was also provided at meal times. Age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery were provided in each care room.
- Younger children in the Baby care room were observed sitting in highchairs at mealtimes while older children were facilitated at wooden tables with chairs that enabled the children to sit comfortably with their feet on the ground.
- In discussion during nappy changing a member of staff from the Baby care room stated that the children's nappies are changed before morning snack at 10.00, before lunch at 12 noon and again at 2.30 pm and as required. This was observed in practice on the day.
- Children in the Pre-school 4 care room were observed accessing the toilet area independently, staff were available to provide assistance, if required.

- Sleep was child led in line with the service’s sleep policy. This was observed in the Baby care room when one child sitting in a high chair, showing signs of tiredness, was lifted by a staff member and put down to sleep.
- Children’s independence was promoted by staff in all care rooms. Examples included children in the Pre-school 4 care room putting on their boots and coats for outdoor play and children in the Baby room being encouraged to eat with a spoon.
- All care rooms had rest/quiet with suitable soft furnishings. The cosy rest area in the Pre-school 4 was furnished with two couches with a mat on the floor and books and sensory equipment were within easy access. The area was located in an alcove and the children could use curtains to close off the area should they require to sit on their own away from noisy activities. The adults could still hear and see what was happening.
- Children in the Baby care room were observed to be free to sit, crawl and pull themselves up by way of a walk bar on the wall encouraging learning to walk in a safe space. The layout of the additional care rooms supported the children to move freely to explore and engage with their chosen activities.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Throughout the day, and particularly at snack and lunch time, staff in the care rooms were heard engaging in social conversation with the children, which helped to promote a relaxed and happy atmosphere.
- Interactions between staff members and children in the Baby care room were observed to be warm and sensitive. Examples included staff members communicating positively with the babies using soft and gentle tones, offering reassurance by sitting near them on the floor and providing comfort to children when they were upset.
- Sibling interactions were facilitated. A child from the Toddler room was observed coming into the Baby room to say hi and goodnight to a sibling who was going to bed, after eating lunch. Staff stated that siblings visiting, particularly in the afternoon, is facilitated in the service.
- Staff stated that meetings and room meetings with management are carried out quarterly and appraisals are carried out yearly. Minutes of quarterly meetings with management and room meetings were furnished to the inspector and included topics such as resources, training, developing areas and collective responsibilities.

- A variety of communication methods were stated as being in use to communicate with parents/guardians including a software package on a digital device, where information regarding each child's eating, sleeping, toileting and activities carried out were sent in real time. This was observed in use by staff carrying out sleep checks during the day in both the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler care rooms.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined areas which provided playful opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children in all developmental areas.
- Play equipment and resources were age and stage appropriate. They were positioned in baskets on low-level shelving which provided choice of materials and promoted independence.
- The Baby care room floor area surrounded by soft mats and support cushions. A walk bar supporting children to balance and aid independent walking was visible along with a shatterproof mirror enabling children to explore their sense of self.
- The walls in each care room were decorated with educational photographs related to curriculum themes, children's artwork, birthdays displayed with each child's picture and birthdates and family pictures which were framed.
- There were four outdoor play areas providing a range of developmentally appropriate equipment and a number of areas of interest and challenge for all of the children. Examples included one area with a large metal jungle gym with a slide, tunnel and climbing rungs along with two swings. Children from the Pre-school one & two care rooms were observed using chalk on a large black board and riding tricycles, scooters and taxis promoting gross motor skills. A covered area was available to enable the children to access the outdoor area in all weathers and the younger children had their own secure play area with appropriate play equipment. A planting shed in a large grass area was also in use.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Observations, which detailed each individual children's needs and interests, linked to Aistear the curriculum framework, were available on the software package on the digital device and these were furnished to the inspector. In addition, each child in the Pre-school 4 care room had a file with themed individual artwork.

- Children’s language and development was supported through one to one and group discussions and songs which were observed during the inspection. An example included one child talking to an adult about the underwater theme and the sea creatures they had seen at an aquarium on a recent holiday
- A range of books were available from the book cases in each care room which supported the children’s language and development which were also theme related.

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 door was secured by a keypad and buzzer located in the reception area. Staff could see through the office window into reception and identify who had pressed the buzzer preventing the access of unauthorised adults. An electronic button used to exit the door was placed out of reach of children on the inside, preventing unsupervised children from exiting the building.
- Blind cords in all care rooms and sleep rooms were secured with hooks, out of reach of the children.
- Windows were secured to prevent access by the children.
- A child’s hand rail was fitted to the main stair case available enabling children to move safely up and down the stairs.
- The staircase was well lit with both natural and artificial light.
- The three high chairs in use in the Baby care room were fitted with five-point harnesses, preventing children from climbing out of them.
- All heavy storage equipment and furniture was anchored preventing it from falling or tipping.
- Storage facilities along with indoor and outdoor waste was inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored on high shelving in each care room which was out of reach of the children in the room.
- Unsafe areas including the kitchen were inaccessible to the children and cupboards under sink areas were fitted with safety catches.

- The perimeters of the outdoor areas were secured with high metal green fencing, hedging and bolted metal gates.

Infection Control:

- Children and adults had access to thermostatically controlled hot water, automatic dispensing paper for hand drying, dispensing soap and pedal operated bins for the disposal of paper waste.
- Adults in the Baby changing area were observed wearing disposable aprons and gloves. The staff member disinfected the mat and area after use and disposed of the used nappy into a nappy sack and then placed it the pedal operated nappy changing bin. Both the adult and the child washed their hands after the nappy change.
- The nappy bin schedule and cleaning schedule were noted to be up to date and completed.
- Children's belongings in the Toddler care room were placed in individual cubby houses and on hooks, off the main floor area.
- Sterilised soothers in the Baby care room were stored in each child's own individual container, preventing cross contamination.
- Staff were observed sanitising tables before and after meals maintaining cleanliness and helping to prevent the spread of germs.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available for both younger and older children. It was stored in original containers and placed out of reach of the children in the office.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room located off both the Baby and Wobbler sleep areas. The Baby sleep room was fitted with ten children's cots and three children were observed sleeping in cots in the Wobbler sleep room at 1.00 o'clock. Eleven toddlers were asleep in the Toddler room after lunch on stackable beds with two adults supervising.
- Audio monitors were heard in use in both the Baby and Wobbler sleep areas.
- Digital evidence indicated that sleep checks were carried out every ten minutes recording the time a staff member physically checked the sleeping child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the sleep room.
- Cellular blankets were in observed in use for children under 2 years of age in cots and those children over two years had a blanket and a pillow.

- Rest/quiet areas were provided in each of the care rooms to facilitate a child to rest or sit quietly away from noisy activities.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed in the care rooms and in the corridors.
- Fire extinguishers were secured on brackets to the walls of the care rooms and corridors.
- The fire assembly sign was visible in the outdoor play area.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) Garda vetting was available for all 28 adults. However, two 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'.
- (2) Flexes from radios and fans lying on the floors of the Baby and Wobbler sleep areas were accessible to children, posing a tripping hazard. This was also noted as a non-compliance for the Wobbler sleep room in the previous report on 17 July 2023. The registered provider stated in the corrective and preventive actions that the flexes were now out of reach; this was not observed in practice on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- (3) Contrary to the service's Safe Sleep policy staff in the Baby room stated that cots were cleaned at the end of the week and not after shared use, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the manager;

General Safety:

- (1) Garda vetting disclosures have been renewed for each adult and are now on file. The recruitment policy has been amended to reflect that Garda vetting will be renewed every three years.
- (2) New shelving and conduits are now in place for the flexes from the radios and fans which were lying on the floors of the Baby and Wobbler sleep areas.

Infection Control:

- (3) Staff have been reminded that shared cots are cleaned between use. The safe sleep policy and amended cleaning record were circulated to staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) Copies of two renewed Garda vetting disclosures were received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (2) Photographs of the new shelving and conduits, in place on the walls in the Baby and Wobbler sleep areas, were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- (3) The statement from the manager has been accepted. A copy of the cot sheet changing record for shared cots was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the manager have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that three adults had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training and seven adults had paediatric first aid training. The staff roster confirmed that a person trained in first aid was available at all times.
- (2) (a) (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available to the adults at all times, while the early years children were in the service. The box was stored in the office.

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 firefighting 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)
- (a) Written records of monthly fire drills were available in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated 18 April 2024, with previous dates including 28 March 2024 and 21 February 2024.
 - (b) Written records were available recording the number, type and maintenance records of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 4 October 2023 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 23 March 2024.
- (2)
- (c) All records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review by the inspector.
- (4) The fire drill routines were located on the wall of the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was insured. The certificate stated that the service was insured for 115 full day children and the expiry date was recorded as 27 March 2025.