

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC041		
Name of Service:	Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG		
Address of Service:	Ballyhass, Cecilstown, Mallow, Co Cork		
Eircode:	P51AT21		
Name of Registered Provider:	Tadgh Hickey		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM 39
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Place Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y		
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and M Creagh		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		

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. The services operating hours are from 8:00 until 18:00, 48 weeks of the year and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme is facilitated from 09:15 to 12:15, Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year. A school age 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; the Baby room, Wobbler room, Toddler room, Pre-school 1 and 2 room and Pre-school 3 room. 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; the Pre-school 4 and the School age room, and a staff room. Staff and children's sanitary facilities are located on both floors. The outdoor environment offers a large area in the back of the building segregated into play areas, along with an additional grass area and a separate outdoor play area for the babies in the middle of the building.

Staffing

There are a total of 27 staff employed by the service. This included school age staff, kitchen staff and the maintenance person. On the day of inspection 12 staff were working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider, person in charge and staff 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 service had a designated person in charge and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.

(6) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.

(c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each of the staff members.

(2) Of the 27 staff members employed in the service, 5 staff files and the registered providers file were the subject to review as the other employment records were reviewed at the previous inspection which took place on 13 May 2024. One additional staff members Garda vetting was reviewed also.

(a) Of the 12 required references, 7 were from previous employers with the record of validation on file.

(b) Of the 12 required references, 5 were from a source other than a previous employer with records of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the six staff members. The registered provider was aware of the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(4) Records demonstrated that the five staff reviewed had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 8 as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The adult is awaiting response from the embassy and the notary office in relation to the police vetting. The service will ensure that future employees will have police vetting prior to employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of emails sent in relation to police vetting were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

Evidence of an attempted application for the staff member for International Police Vetting was reviewed. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to regulation 9(2)(d) remains out outstanding.

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

The following policies were reviewed on inspection:

- Accident and Incident policy.
- Healthy Eating policy
- Administration of Medication policy.

The policies contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for children.

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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The adult to child ratios were observed to meet the minimum requirement over the duration of the inspection. The ratio was as follows:

- The Baby room had five children being cared for by one staff member in the morning and four children being cared for by one staff member in the afternoon.
- The Wobbler room had four children being cared for by one staff member in the morning and six children being cared for by one staff member in the afternoon.
- The Toddler room had 16 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the morning and nine children being cared for by two staff members in the afternoon
- The Pre-school 1 and 2 room had 19 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the morning and 20 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the afternoon.
- The Preschool 3 room had six children being cared for by one staff member in the morning and the room was not in use in the afternoon.
- The Preschool 4 room had 13 children being cared for by 2 staff members in the morning and the room was not in use in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the roster.

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;*
- a(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 service has 88 children's records available for inspection and a sample of 10 of these were inspected. All the records inspected were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

(3)

(c) The records, as identified above, were made available to the inspectors for review.

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:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The staff roster for the week of inspection was available for assessment and previous rosters were also available on request. A copy of the roster was received; the roster was in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.
 - (j) There were 31 records of medication administration reviewed. All 31 records were completed with staff signatures, requests for administration completed by parents/ guardians and the correct paperwork for administration was completed.
 - (k) The accident and incident record books were reviewed, and 30 records were assessed. All 30 records were completed, signed and dated by both staff and parents/ guardians.

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of the relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day.
- Children in the Baby room and Toddler room had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and staff sat at the children's level and assisted if needed and encouraged conversation. There was chatter and laughter amongst the children observed at mealtimes in the Toddler room.
- Nappy changing was observed to be carried out on a regular basis and when required. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected with one child being changed at a time.
- The older children were observed to access the sanitary area independently with the staff available to assist if required.
- Children's need for mobility was met with both indoor and outdoor play areas being used on the day of inspection.
- The weather on the day of inspection was hot and staff were observed to apply sun cream to the children and ensure they wore sun hats outdoors. Consent for the application of sun cream was gained on the enrolment forms.

Supporting relationships:

- The adults were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection, with encouragement and praise for specific tasks given in a warm and caring manner. For example, when children played hairdressing and applied toy make up on a staff member in Preschool 1 and 2, nurturing and enthusiastic interactions were observed.
- Staff informed the inspector that the service operated in partnership with the parents, with an online application to share information and they also communicated in person with parents or guardians at collection and drop off.
- Individual learning journals were observed in the Wobbler room where photos of group work and narratives by the staff in relation to themes and activities was evident for parents and guardians to review.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care rooms at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- The inspector observed an upset child to seek out a staff member who responded positively to the child in the Baby room.

- Spare clothing was available for children if required. A staff member was observed dealing with a child who had wet clothing and was observed to be sensitive and caring in their interactions with the child.
- In the Toddler room, a teddy was used to link families in with the service, the teddy went home with individual children for the weekends, along with a scrap book where the adventure of the teddy was recorded by each family through photos and a written record.
- Family photos, an all about me area, birthday calendars and a world map marking where children had family were displayed on the walls in the care rooms which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing, questioning and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example staff playing duck duck goose with children and playing with the water tables in the outdoor area.
- A staff member was observed to sing with the children in the Wobbler room which supported positive relationships with the children.

Physical and material environment:

- The indoor environment of the care rooms was child friendly and bright. The care rooms were laid out with defined interest areas, including a home corner area, construction area, reading area, music area, dress up area and small world area. The layout allowed staff to easily supervise the children as they moved from area to area.
- The furniture in the room was suitable for the age and stage of development of each child. One child was observed in a highchair and other children were seated at low tables with their feet on the ground.
- The material was largely accessible to the children for independent play. There was open shelving with play materials and items laid out so that the children could identify and access them easily and independently.
- Children's artwork was displayed at the appropriate level for the children.
- There was a variety of materials and defined interest areas in the outdoor area, including climbing areas, slides, ride on toys, sand and water tables. Children were observed playing with chalk and bubbles also. The environment created a challenging, creative and enriched experience for the children.
- The outdoor ground surface had tarmacadam or shock absorbing surface, and a grass area was also available for use.
- A rest area was available in each room equipped with child size sofas or soft seated areas.

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 services menu was displayed in the hallway for the parents and guardians to view in the service.
- A healthy eating policy was in place and healthy meals and snacks were observed being given at regular times throughout the day.
- All meals and snacks were provided by the service. The inspector was informed that a selection of cereals, toast, water and milk was offered to the children for breakfast.
- Snacks were observed being served in the Baby room and consisted of bite sizes of apples, pears and bananas. Children were provided with water or milk in individual beakers. A hot lunch of chilli con carne was observed being served in the Toddler room.
- Children were provided with individual water mugs at mealtime.
- The staff informed the inspector that alternative food was available for children who did not want what was on the menu.
- Staff stated that an afternoon snack was served, and afternoon tea was available for children in full day care which consisted of sandwiches.

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:

- Entry to the service was via an electronic keypad, with a doorbell in use for parents and visitors. Exit through the same door was controlled by a release button, which was located at adult height. These safety mechanisms ensured that the risk of unauthorised access and the risk of a child exiting the premises unsupervised, were minimalised.

- The toys were suitable and those assessed had no evidence of pinch or crush points that may cause injury to a child.
- Cleaning materials were inaccessible and out of reach to children throughout the building.
- Cables and flexes were inaccessible to children.
- The outdoor play areas were secured by a combination of fencing and secured gates.
- A child's handrail was fitted to the main staircase, allowing children to move safely up and down the stairs.
- The two highchairs in use in the Baby care room were fitted with appropriate harnesses, preventing children from climbing out of them.
- Visibility markings were provided on glass panel doors at children's height, reducing the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.

Infection control:

- The staff informed inspectors that the linen used for the cots and the stackable beds is individual to each child and laundered in the service after each use.
- The standard cots shared by the children were identifiable and had waterproof mattress covers.
- Sterilised soothers in the Baby room were stored in each child's own individual container, preventing cross contamination.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to the children and staff. Water temperatures were recorded between 28.0°C and 34.3°C in the hand wash basins in the children's sanitary areas. Hand washing by the children was observed to take place under the supervision of the adults prior to mealtimes and after using the toilet.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were used throughout the service.
- Staff were observed to use plastic aprons, vinyl gloves, and wash their hands and the children's hands after each nappy change to prevent cross contamination.
- The nappy changing mats were clean and intact, and suitable disinfectant was accessible at each changing unit.
- The children's barrier creams were individually labelled.
- Bags were stored off the ground, on hooks.
- The cleaning records displayed in the care rooms were maintained and up to date.

Administration of medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to the children on the day of inspection.

- Temperature reducing medicine was stored in its original boxes and the medicine inspected was in date. Consent for administering this medication was obtained on the enrolment form on the children's file.

Safe sleep:

- There were two designated sleep rooms, one in the Baby room and one in the Wobbler room, all containing cots.
- The Toddler room was also used for sleep at one period during the day of inspection, where children slept on stackable beds under the supervision of the staff.
- Staff members used a digital device to record children's breathing, colour and position while they slept. The inspectors were advised that these checks were undertaken at ten-minute intervals, and this was confirmed through review of 10 sleep logs.
- The temperature of the two sleep rooms and the Toddler room was maintained between 21.6°C and 22°C while children were sleeping. The temperatures recorded were within the acceptable range for children over 12 months.

Fire safety:

- The firefighting equipment was safely tethered to the walls.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed in the care rooms and corridors on the day of inspection.
- The fire assembly sign was visible in the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a full day care service and the policy was valid until the 27 March 2026.