

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC041
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballyhass, Cecilstown, Mallow, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 AT21
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Tadgh Hickey
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/07/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	33	PM	25
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Friel
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<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Ballyhass Childcare Facility CLG is a community early years service in operation since 2007. It offers a choice of full day care, part-time and sessional services, facilitating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme during term time from 9.15 am until 12.15 pm. Although registered for children aged from 0 – 6 years, currently the service accommodates children aged from 3 months upwards. Opening hours are from 8 am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, 48 weeks of the year. A breakfast club is available in the morning from 8.00 am until 9.00 am and an afterschool service operates from 1.50 pm until 6.00 pm.

The service is located in the rural area of Ballyhass in North Cork. It operates from a purpose-built childcare facility which has seven care rooms, five of which are located on the ground floor namely Babies, Wobblers, Toddlers Pre-school 1 and 2 and Pre-school 3. Two rooms are located on the upper floor namely Pre-school 4 and School age care. There are two designated sleep rooms on the ground floor, one located off the Wobbler room and the second adjacent to the Wobbler room. A reception area, office and kitchen are also located on the ground floor. There are child and adult sanitary facilities located throughout the building. A large carpark is located at the front of the service with ample room for parents and staff to park their cars.

### Staffing

There were fifteen staff employed on the day of inspection including one chef and three office staff. 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 inspections 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.*
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*
- (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, a deputy and named staff available to deputise.
- (b) Both the designated person and deputy were available throughout the inspection. The staff roster indicated that the designated person, deputy and/or named staff are rostered to ensure that two or more of the aforementioned are available while the pre-school children are on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure detailed in the child safeguarding statement available in the reception area. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) The manager confirmed that four adults had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection on 18 June 2022. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to these adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were five validated references from previous employers and three validated references from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were on file for each of the four adults.
- (d) An international police vetting disclosure was available for one adult who had lived outside the State, as an adult, for more than six consecutive months.
- (3) All vetting was conducted prior to commencement of employment and contact with the children for all of the adults.

(4) Two of the four adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Education and Care at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) The third adult was awaiting accreditation of a childcare qualification, however in the interim period there was no letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The fourth adult's qualifications required verification from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The following statements were submitted by the manager:

(4) A relief staff member has been employed to cover while the third staff member awaits accreditation of a childcare qualification and the fourth staff member awaits verification of a major award in childcare.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

(4) The statement from the manager that a relief staff member has been employed to cover while the third staff member awaits accreditation of a childcare qualification, and the fourth staff member awaits verification of a major award in childcare has been accepted. In addition, the registered provider has stated that in the event that both staff members prove unsuccessful the service will no longer allow these two staff to work with the early years children as part of the adult-child ratio.

### Summary Comment

The requirements for Regulation 9 (4) have been met. This will be reviewed at 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) At all times the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) There were three of the seven care rooms in operation on the day of inspection.

#### Wobblers (12 months – 24 months)

There were 8 full day care children and one sessional child in attendance with two staff members.

#### Toddlers (2 years to 3 years)

There were eight full day care children and four part-time children in attendance with two staff members.

#### Pre-school 1 & 2

There were five full day care, seven part-time children and five full day care school age children in attendance with three staff members.

(8) The staff roster indicated that there were two staff members in the service at all times while the pre-school was in operation.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

*(1) A sample of twenty pre-school children's records were reviewed, each were found to contain the particulars (a) to (i) above.*

### 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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

#### BASIC NEEDS:

- A three-week menu plan was available on the notice board in the service. The food observed being served on the day was healthy and nutritious. It had been prepared by the onsite chef and was served at regular intervals. Children had access to breakfast cereals, toast, milk and water between 8.00 am and 9.00 am and brown scones along with fruit was available from 10.30 am. The consistency of the hot meal observed being served in the Wobbler room at 12.20 pm of roast chicken with potatoes, broccoli and gravy was appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children in the care room. In the afternoon children in the Pre-school 1& 2 care room were observed being offered rice cakes, bananas and raisins between 3.00 pm and 3.30 pm. Staff stated that a further snack is offered of breadsticks, crispbreads and rice cakes between 4.00 pm and 4.30 pm.
- Each care room had age appropriate and developmentally suitable cutlery and crockery for the children eating and drinking at mealtimes. Children in the Wobbler care room were observed eating from bowls with spoons by themselves, adults were available to provide assistance if required.
- Bibs were observed on children in the Wobbler room while they were eating food.
- Children in both the Wobbler and Toddler care rooms were observed being changed regularly. In conversation staff stated that the children are changed two hourly and when required.
- In each of the care rooms the children had a suitable area to rest and sit quietly away from noisy activities. The rest area in the Toddler care room was fitted with two spotted rugs and soft vinyl cushions for the children to sit on. A selection of soft toys was available for individual use.
- Children could move freely around the round care rooms with children in the Wobbler provided with matting facilitating children learning to walk in a safe place. Each group of children was observed playing in their respective outdoor play areas throughout the day.
- Staff working with the children were noted to be kind and sensitive when dealing with the children during nappy changing and while playing indoors and outdoors.

#### SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff members were observed sitting at the children's level when feeding the younger children or when assisting the children to feed themselves.
- In the outdoor play area of the Pre-school 1 and 2 staff were observed supporting and encouraging children on equipment and reminding children of safety rules while climbing up the slide.

- Staff in the Wobbler/Toddler outdoor play area were observed supporting children to engage positively with each other, encouraging the children to take turns and share equipment.
- Information was observed being recorded on an electronic application, this included the toileting, food, sleep and activities of each child. Staff stated that this information is shared in real time with parents/guardians and that they also converse with parents at drop off and collection. The phone is used in cases of emergencies.
- Quarterly staff meetings and annual appraisals were stated as being carried out by management.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Each care room was set out in clearly defined areas providing play opportunities to enhance learning across all areas of development. In the Wobbler care room the play equipment was presented on open shelving in easily accessible baskets enabling choice and independence for each child. A shatter proof mirror was secured to the wall helping to develop visual senses and self-awareness. Older children in the Pre-school 1 & room had access to materials which encouraged cognitive development such as stickle bricks and magnetic shapes. Imaginary play opportunities were provided through access to materials and resources including a dolls house, home corner, dressing up clothes and a hairdresser station.
- An adult sofa was available in the Wobbler room to allow staff working with the children to sit and read to the children or comfort them.
- Suitable age and stage tables and chairs were available in each care room. Children in the Wobbler and Toddler room care rooms were observed sitting at lunch time on small wooden floor chairs with armrests while the Pre-school 1 & 2 children were observed sitting on higher seats with back rests.
- A range of age and stage appropriate books were available in each care room which supported children's language development and encouraged their imagination.
- The large outdoor area located at the back of the service was separated into two main play areas namely the Toddler/Wobbler area the Pre-school play area. Both outdoor play areas provided a range of developmentally appropriate equipment. The Toddler/Wobbler area had both tarmac and safety matting, providing a shock absorbable surface, encouraging children to explore in a safe environment. Equipment in this area included sand with resources for sensory development. Slides, rockers and ride-ons (with a low centre of gravity) were available encouraging gross motor skills. The older children in the Pre-school play area were observed cycling on the taxi tricycles and scooters while others ran after each other in the open space. A large piece of physical apparatus where the children could climb and slide was situated in the middle of the play area along with swings which were cordoned off, for safety.

Opportunities for mark making were available with a number of blackboard flowers attached to the fencing, a large mud kitchen area and playhouse provided opportunities for imaginary play. Both groups had access to the greenhouse which offered additional sensory experiences and exploration with a stone area and a grassed area, known as the field, was also available in a separate area.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### **BASIC NEEDS:**

- (1) While a jug of water was available in the Wobbler care room the children could not readily access water throughout the day as the cups were removed after each meal. Staff stated that the cups are removed to the kitchen after each meal and there are no additional cups in the care room.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (1) Cups are now available in all rooms throughout the day. Staff have been reminded to ensure that children have access to water at all times.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (1) The statement from the manager that cups are now available in all rooms throughout the day and that staff have been reminded to ensure that children have access to water at all times has been accepted.

### Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 19 has been met.

### 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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (b) There were adequate and suitable facilities for the children to rest during the day. There were two designated sleep rooms, one located in the Wobbler care room and the other opposite the Toddler care room in the hall. In addition, the Toddler care room was in use as a sleep room after lunch. The inspector observed children going for a rest/sleep at 1.00 pm including four children going down to sleep in cots in the dedicated Wobbler sleep area, three children on stackable beds in the Toddler care room and three children using three of the eight cots available in the dedicated sleep room in the hall. Each cot was fitted with a waterproof mattress in good condition and the children each had a cellular blanket or sleep bag. While the children resting/sleeping on stackable beds in the Toddler care room had access to pillows and blankets. Additional stackable beds were available, if required. The rooms all had ambient lighting with blinds fitted securely to the windows and air conditioning available in each room maintaining the required sleep room temperature of 16°C - 20°C.

### 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 by a buzzer system in the reception area, this was answered by an adult working in the office, preventing unauthorised persons entering the building, staff use the available keypad. An electronic button, located out of reach on the children on the internal exit door, is used to exit the building ensuring children cannot exit the building unsupervised.
- Windows were fitted with restrictors ensuring children could not exit or fall from them.

- All blind cords were secured with hooks attached to the window frames, which were inaccessible by the children.
- All toys and play equipment indoor appeared in good condition.
- Heavy play equipment outdoors was anchored ensuring that it could not tip or fall.
- Outdoor waste and general rubbish were stored behind a fenced off area in the outdoor area which was inaccessible to the children.
- The oil tank and generator were secured with high metal fencing and a padlocked gate ensuring the children could not access the area.
- Double bolted gates ensured that children could not access unsafe areas in the outdoor area.
- Unsafe areas including the kitchen were inaccessible to the children and cupboards under sink areas were fitted with safety catches.
- The perimeter of the outdoor area was secured with metal fencing, high hedging and bolted metal gates.

### Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water ranging in temperature between 34.3°C and 37.9°C, dispensing soap, automatic dispensing paper towel roll for drying hands and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- The large nappy changing area was fitted with two changing mats both of which were clean and in good condition. The children's labelled nappies and creams were all located within arm reach and disposable adult gloves and aprons were available.
- Children's personal belongings were stored on hooks in the rooms off the floor areas.
- All children had a change of clothing, in the event of an accident, located in individually labelled storage boxes in each care room, these were labelled with a photograph or symbol for each child.
- A cleaner was employed after service hours, on a daily basis, to ensure the cleanliness of the inside of the service.

### Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication stored in the original container was stored out of reach in a high cupboard in the office.

### Safe Sleep:

- Physical sleep checks every ten-minutes were observed being carried out with staff recording the information on an electronic application including the position, colour and breathing of each children.

A staff member was present with the children resting and sleeping in the Toddler room. Sleep room temperatures were recorded on a separate schedule.

- Sound monitors were in use while the children were asleep in the dedicated sleep rooms.
- Air conditioning units were in use throughout the sleep period in the rooms where children were sleeping.

### Fire Safety:

- All emergency fire exits were unobstructed and fitted with thumb twist cylinders, aiding the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- The fire assembly points, of which there were three, were identified with visible signs.
- Firefighting equipment was secured to the walls.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- (1) Two lidless water butts were present in the outdoor garden area, one was full of water and easily accessible from a picnic table which was directly positioned beside it, posing a safety hazard should a child climb into it.
- (2) The water from the butts was collected from guttering above the area and was being used by the children in the mud kitchen posing a safety risk to the children as the water may be contaminated with bird droppings.
- (3) Disinfectant spray located beside the changing mat was accessible in the Toddler nappy changing area, posing a safety risk from exposure to toxic substances.
- (4) Flexes from the radio and audio monitor plugged in beside a cot were accessible to children in the Wobbler sleep room, posing a safety risk.
- (5) Pillowcases and bed linen in use in the Toddler care room on the stackable beds during sleep time were noted to be threadbare with the stitching coming apart, posing a safety risk if children got their fingers caught during sleep.

#### Infection Control:

- (6) The outdoor windows, sills, doors and ground of the Pre-school and Wobbler care rooms were compacted with bird droppings from bird's nests located in the eaves of the building posing a safety hazard. Children were walking and cycling past the area, in conversation with staff in the pre-school play area they stated that it had been mentioned to management on a number of occasions. Management stated that the area is normally power washed at the weekends, but this had not happened in a significant amount of time.

- (7) A staff member from the Toddler care room, changing children in the nappy changing room, was observed on two separate occasions with their disposable apron untied posing a risk of cross infection.
- (8) Children’s handwashing, after nappy changing, was not observed to not carried out by a staff member in the Wobbler nappy changing area. This was in contrast to the service’s nappy changing procedure which stated that “Children are to wash hands after each nappy change”.
- (9) Cot sheet changing records had not been completed for the day of inspection for three children asleep in the designated sleep room in the hall, this may lead to cross infection in the case of shared cots.
- (10) Yellow cloths used for cleaning were noted to be left lying at the sinks throughout the period of inspection in both the Wobbler and Toddler care rooms, posing a risk of cross infection.
- (11) There was no daily sterilising of soothers in place in the Wobbler and Toddler care rooms, posing a risk of cross infection. While there were sterilising solutions for mouthed toys available in both the Wobbler and Toddler care rooms, in conversation staff were unaware that these could be used for sterilising soothers.
- (12) A vent in the Pre-school 3 sanitary area and an air conditioning unit in the nappy changing area were both clogged with dust impeding the circulation of fresh air.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the manager:

#### **General Safety:**

- (1) The water butts have been emptied and removed until lids have been found or they can be replaced.

#### **Infection Control:**

- (6) A new Bird Dropping Management Procedure has been put in place along with a risk management assessment. We are looking at preventive measures for next year.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

The manager submitted the following documentation and photographic evidence.

#### **General Safety:**

- (1) Photographs of the empty water butts removed from the area.

#### **Infection Control:**

- (6) A Bird Dropping Management Procedure detailing the removal of the bird droppings on a daily cleaning routine to manage the present bird dropping issue and a comprehensive risk assessment.

### Summary Comment

The requirements for Regulation 23 have been met.

### 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 demonstrate that a person with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available at all times while the pre-school children were present in the service.

(2) (a) (b) Each care room had a first aid box. The main first aid box, which was adequately stocked was stored on a high cupboard in the office, inaccessible to the children. All of the first aid boxes were available throughout the inspection.

### 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) A written record was kept of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 22 June 2023.
- (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment maintenance certificate was dated 11 October 2022 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 10 January 2023.

## 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 policy stated that the service is insured for 95 children on a full day care basis. The expiry date of the policy was recorded as the 27 March 2024.