

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC084
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Name of Service:	Care-A-Lot Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Lissaniskey, Upton, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 HC64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Averil Sheehan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
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Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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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

This privately owned early years service was established in 2008 and is situated at the rear of the registered providers private residence in Upton, Co Cork. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years of age, 7:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. The services operated 4 care rooms, The service consists of a purpose built, two storeys building along with two care rooms named 'The Lodge' and 'The Clubhouse'. The service operates 4 care rooms, downstairs accommodates a baby/wobbler room, a nappy changing area, sleep room and staff toilet, upstairs comprises of a playroom (preschool 2) and a children's toilet facility. An adjoining building called the 'Lodge' comprises of a playroom called preschool 1 with a separate kitchenette and children's toilet facility. A separate building houses 'the Clubhouse' which accommodates toddlers. An enclosed outdoor area to the side of the service is available to the children.

Staffing

The service employs 12 staff, which includes the registered provider who works in the service. On the day of inspection, seven staff were present and working directly with the children. A student on work placement was also present.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*

(c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise if needed.
- (b) The designated person in charge who is the registered provider was not on the premises. The named deputy person was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and the staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Thirteen recruitment files were reviewed including the file of the registered provider and a student on work placement.
- (a) Twenty-one references available were from a previous employer and were validated.
- (b) Five references available were from a reputable source and were validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes 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) Police vetting had been obtained for two staff members who had lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Twelve of the staff working directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 or a qualification that was deemed equivalent by the minister. The student on work placement did not hold a qualification and was supervised at all times while working directly with the children.

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 policy and procedure were reviewed:

- Infection control policy

This policy contained the relevant information to guide the staff in their care practices.

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) There were an adequate number of staff available to care for the children in attendance in the service on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were observed to meet the minimum requirements in the care rooms on the day of inspection.

In the morning, the ratios were as follows:

- In the Baby and Wobbler room, there were seven children, aged between 11 months and 2 years, being cared for by two staff members. A student on work placement was also present and was supernumerary to the adult to child ratios.
- In the Clubhouse room, there were five children aged between 2 and 3 years, being cared for by one staff member.
- In the Lodge room, there were six children aged between 3 and 4 years, being cared for by one staff member.
- In the Upstairs Preschool room, there were seven children aged between 4 and 5 years, being cared for by one staff member.

In the afternoon the ratios were as follows:

- In the Baby and Wobbler room, there were seven children, aged between 11 months and 2 years, being cared for by two staff members.
- In the Clubhouse room, there were five children aged between 2 and 3 years, being cared for by one staff member.
- In the Lodge room, there were six children aged between 3 and 4 years, being cared for by one staff member.
- In the Upstairs Preschool room, there were six children aged between 4 and 5 years, being cared for by one staff member.

(8)

(a) There were at least 2 staff members on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. This was observed on the day of inspection and on review of the staff 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;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 12 children's records were assessed and reviewed.
- (a) All records assessed contained the name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) All records assessed contained the date on which each child first attended the service.
 - (c) All records assessed had the capacity to record the date on which each child will cease attending the service.
 - (d) All records assessed had a record of the names and contact numbers of parents and guardians if required.
 - (e) All records assessed had a record of those authorised to collect each child.
 - (f) All records assessed contained details of any illness, disability or allergy each child may have.
 - (g) All records assessed had a record of the name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner.
 - (h) All records assessed had a record of immunisations, if any, received by each child.
 - (i) Eleven of the 12 records had a record of written parental consent for the service to provide emergency medical treatment if required in the event of a medical emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) One of the 12 records did not have a record of written parental consent for the service to provide emergency medical treatment if required in the event of a medical emergency.
- Not having children's records complete may hinder the care and safety of the children in the service if the information is needed for care provision.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in their response that the service followed up with the parent to sign the record for medication treatment.

Preventive Action

The service will ensure that when forms are being signed, that all sections will be fully completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and photographic evidence was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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) The following records were reviewed:

- (i) A staff roster was available and clearly outlined the start and finish times of each staff member.
- (j) Eleven medication records between March 2022 and June 2025 were reviewed and contained all the relevant information.
- (k) Eleven accident and incident records that had occurred between August 2024 and July 2025 were assessed and contained all relevant information required.

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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs

- The children were observed to freely move around the care rooms and outdoor areas participating in different activities of choice.
- All children had several opportunities for outdoor play during the inspection.
- The children in the Baby and Wobbler room had a sheltered area adjacent to the care room to allow the children to freely move from the care room to the outdoor area.
- Children in the care rooms had individual water beakers and were accessible to the children throughout the day during the inspection.
- The service promoted a healthy eating policy. The service supplied breakfast, morning and afternoon snack to the children. Cereal, fruit, meat sandwiches, cheese and veg were observed to be available to the children. The main meal was provided by the parents and guardians which consisted of pasta, mash potatoes, meat, veg, bread and soup.
- The staff supported the children during mealtimes and toileting when needed. This promoted the children to develop their self-help skills and independence. Staff were observed assisting children who were toileting training.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and when required during the day in the Baby and Wobbler care room. Sleep times were based on the individual care needs of each child and staff were aware when children displayed signs of tiredness.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff in the Baby and Wobbler room were observed singing and chatting to the children throughout the day.

- Staff were aware of the needs of each child and listened to each child’s opinion. This was observed in the Lodge and Upstairs Preschool rooms. The staff in the care rooms were observed to interact with the children in a respectful manner.
- Family photo walls were on display in the Lodge care room which promoted the children’s sense of identity and belonging.
- Staff were observed communicating with parents on collection at the service. An electronic application was also used as a form of communication with each child’s parents and guardians.
- Staff outlined the importance of inclusion throughout the service and how they can support the development and learning of each child.
- Some children were currently transitioning from care rooms and children in the Baby and Wobbler room were transitioning into the service. Staff supported the children with the transition and were observed showing empathy to children who displayed signs of emotion. The staff outlined the importance of supporting the children at this time.

Programme of Activities

- Children from Upstairs Preschool and Lodge care rooms were observed playing a running game in the outdoor area with the staff and singing songs that promoted movement and exercise.
- In the Baby and Wobbler care room, children were observed playing on a slide, climbing frame and push along toys which supported children’s physical development.
- Children in the Clubhouse were observed playing with the kitchen and role play equipment to support their imagination skills. Music was heard in the care room and the staff member outlined how music promoted language development in children.
- Children in the care rooms were observed reading and listening to story books in the quiet areas after mealtimes which promoted self-regulation.

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 entrance to the service was secured and prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised or any unauthorised access to the service.

- The outdoor areas were observed to be secure on the day of inspection with a gate and fence.
- Blind cords were observed to be secure on inspection.
- All highchairs were observed to be in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses, during the inspection.
- All toys and equipment in the care rooms was observed to be in good condition on inspection.
- All flexes and cables were out of reach to children and observed to be in good condition during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored out of reach to children on inspection.
- Waste storage facilities were observed to be inaccessible to the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to the children and staff in the sanitary areas. Water temperatures in the wash hand basins of the Baby and Wobbler, Lodge and Upstairs Preschool rooms were recorded between 35.6°C and 41.2°C which allowed for effective hand washing.
- Staff were observed cleaning the nappy changing mat between changes in the Baby and Wobbler room.
- Staff were observed cleaning potties that were in use during toilet training in the Clubhouse room.
- Children were observed washing their hands after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- All perishable food items were stored in refrigerators in the care rooms to prevent food from spoiling.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered on the day of inspection. On discussion, the staff were aware of the procedures to carry out in the event of medication needing to be administered. Staff stated they had received training for administration of specific medication as required.

Safe Sleep:

- Suitable sleep equipment such as cots and stackable beds was observed to be in use in the Baby and Wobbler and Clubhouse care rooms.
- Sleep checks were carried out on 10-minute intervals in the Baby and Wobbler room and were recorded on the electronic application.
- The mattresses in the cots were observed to have suitably fitted sheets.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were observed to be clear and free from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. A water temperature in the children's wash hand basin in the Clubhouse was recorded at 48°C. Water temperatures that exceed 43°C poses a risk of scalding to the children. This was a previous non-compliance during an inspection that was carried out on 18 January 2023. The registered provider stated in their corrective and preventive action response that the water temperatures would be monitored to ensure safety. However, this was not found to have happened on inspection.
3. A window in the Lodge care room was easily accessible to children by a bench and play kitchen unit. This posed a risk to the children climbing up and exiting or falling.

Infection Control:

4. In the Baby and Wobbler dedicated sleep room, cots were observed to have less than 50cm between each cot. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children.
5. Three cots in the Baby and Wobbler sleep room were observed to have no waterproof mattresses or waterproof sheets. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children.
6. During nappy changing, a staff member was observed not washing their hands or the children's hands after nappy changing had been carried out. A staff member was observed not changing disposable aprons between nappy changes. This was at variance to the services infection control and nappy changing policy. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children and staff.
7. There was a swing lidded bin observed in the children's sanitary area in the Upstairs Preschool care room. This posed a risk of cross contamination to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in their response:

1. A Garda vetting application in respect of the staff member has been submitted to Tusla.
2. The water temperature has been controlled on the water heating system. A plumber has looked at the system and has adjusted it to a lower temperature. This lowered the temperature of the water in the hand basin.

3. A window latch has been installed on the window.

Preventive Action

1. Regular checks for dates of vetting for staff will take place to ensure they are renewed on time.
2. The water temperature will be recorded every morning.
3. Windows will be checked regularly to make sure they are secured.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

4. A cot has been removed from the cot room and there is now more than 50cm between each cot.
5. Waterproof mattress covers have been purchased for the cots that required them.
6. A staff meeting was held with staff to ensure they are aware of the nappy changing policy. This included changing aprons between changing children and washing their own hands and the hands of the children after nappy changing.
7. A pedal bin has replaced the swing lidded bin in the bathroom.

Preventive Action

4. Cots will be monitored to ensure there is a minimum of 50cm between each cot.
5. Staff will ensure that the waterproof mattress covers are on the cots at all times.
6. All staff and especially new staff are made aware of the nappy changing policy. On induction and in staff meetings, reiterate the nappy changing policy. The nappy changing policy is now on display in the nappy changing area, so staff can refer to it if needed.
7. Ensure that all bins in the service are always foot pedal operated to avoid cross contamination.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documented evidence of a Garda vetting application was submitted to the inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of water temperature recording was submitted to the inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of the window latch was submitted to the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

4. Photographic evidence of the cot room was submitted to the inspectorate.
5. Documented evidence of waterproof covers purchased was submitted to the inspectorate.
6. Documented evidence of the staff meeting was submitted to the inspectorate.
7. Photographic evidence of the foot pedal operated bin was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and evidence submitted was reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements. These will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service on an electronic application.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the service was recorded. The inspector was requested to check in and out of the service.

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) Two staff members that worked directly with the children held a current certificate in First Aid Responder (FAR) training and were on the premises while the service was in operation.

(2)

(a) There were two first aid boxes that were sufficiently stocked and stored out of reach to children.

(b) The first aid boxes were accessible at all times, should it be required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(c) The service was adequately lit and heated, during the inspection. Windows and doors in the care rooms were observed to be opened for fresh air and natural ventilation. Care room temperatures were recorded between 21.1°C and 21.9°C.

(e) The service was equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for the children and staff. Children's sanitary facilities were accessible and ensured that children could use these facilities independently for example wash hand basins with child friendly taps.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. A mechanical ventilation system vent was observed to be clogged with dust in the nappy changing area in the Baby and Wobbler room. A wall in the sanitary area of the Lodge care room was observed to be unclean. This was at variance with the cleaning schedule and records that were reviewed by the inspector.
 2. A foot pedal operated bin was observed to be not sealed, and a foul smell was evident in the nappy changing area in the Baby and Wobbler care room.
 3. Small flies were also observed on the walls, door and nappy changing unit in the nappy changing area in the Baby and Wobbler care room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

1. The mechanical ventilation system vent was cleaned.
2. The nappy bin has been replaced.
3. Small flies have been removed from the area and there is no evidence of them in the room now.

Preventive Action

1. Ensure that staff clean the vent regularly as part of the cleaning schedule.

2. Ensure the nappy bin is sealed to prevent foul smells.
3. Prevent small flies from entering. The door to the nappy changing room will be closed.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of the vent was submitted to the inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the new nappy bin was submitted to the inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of the nappy changing area was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and evidence submitted was reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements. These will be reviewed on next inspection.