

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC224
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Name of Service:	Little Einsteins Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	The Avenue, Water Park, Carrigaline, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P43 P231
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Name of Registered Provider:	Janice Edwards
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	04/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM	49
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Mallow Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue and D Prendergast
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

Little Einsteins Childcare Centre is a privately operated full day care service that is situated in a residential area in the town of Carrigaline. The service provides care to children aged between 0 and 6 years, Monday to Friday. The service is registered to provide care from 8am to 6:00pm, however is currently providing care from 8am to 5:30pm. The service is located in a 2-storey purpose built detached building. There are 7 care rooms in total; the Baby room, the Wobbler room, the Toddler room, Playgroup room, Montessori 2, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2. The 8th room from previous inspection in 2024 is no longer in use by the service and has been removed. There are 2 sleep rooms for use by children adjacent to the Baby room and the Wobbler Room. There is an outdoor play area provided to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

In total, there are 29 adults employed at the setting, of whom 23 work with early years children. One adult works solely with school age children. The registered provider and one of the kitchen staff are not involved in the direct care of the children. The two other kitchen staff members also work with school age children. The inspectors were advised that the service's designated cleaner only attends the childcare facility after 6.00pm, when the service is closed.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputies, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

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

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

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

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

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the person in charge of operating the early years service. In the event of her absence, two named deputies had been appointed.
- (b) Both deputies were working at the setting when the inspectors arrived and the registered provider arrived within an hour. For the remainder of the inspection, the registered provider or one of the deputies was present. Review of the staff roster also indicated that either the registered provider or a deputy were on duty at all times.
- (2) Five adults had commenced employment at the service since the previous inspection on 19 and 20 June 2024. Recruitment records in respect of these adults were therefore examined, along with those of three students.
- (a) Of the 16 required written and validated references, 11 had been provided by past employers, with validation records in place for each of these references.
- (b) Five of the references were from sources other than previous employers and had been validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were in place for the eight adults. It was also noted that Garda vetting for an additional three staff members had expired since the previous inspection and were renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 4 of the 5 adults, who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) A recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education had been attained by three of the adults. It was also noted that a staff member who did not hold a qualification at the time of the previous inspection on 19 and 20 June 2024 had since attained a level 5 award.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) The required police vetting was unavailable for 1 of the adults, who had resided in another jurisdiction for a period that exceeded 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18.
- (4) Evidence of a minimum level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent, recognised qualification, was unavailable in respect of two of the five new staff members, who were observed to work directly with the early years children. A third adult, who was not a new staff member, was also found to be working directly with the children, without a relevant qualification. This non-compliance had been identified at the previous inspection on 19 and 20 June 2024, when the same adult was found to be involved in the direct care of the early years children. The CAPA response at the time stated that this adult was allocated to the school age service and would not be allowed to work with the early years children going forward. However, this remained an issue. Non-compliances regarding unqualified staff members were also identified at previous inspections on 31 October 2023 and 11 October 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (d) The registered provider has stated the required police vetting has been applied for.
- (4) The registered provider submitted staff rosters indicating that the staff members who did not hold a minimum level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education do not work with the children directly. The registered provider will ensure to check qualifications in the future with adults working directly with children.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)
- (d) Photographic evidence of police vetting certificate has been submitted by the registered provider.
- (4) Photographic evidence of the staff roster has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed on 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.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Baby room in the morning, there were 2 staff working directly with 5 children aged between 11 months and 16 months old, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, 1 staff member was working with 3 children all aged between 12 months and 16 months.
- In the Wobbler room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 7 children aged between 1 to 2 years old, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff members and 1 student working with 7 children aged between 1 to 2 years.
- In the Toddler room in the morning, there were 2 staff and 1 student working with 7 children aged between 2 to 3 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was 1 staff member working with 6 children aged between 2 to 3 years.
- In the Playgroup room in morning session, there were 3 staff working directly with 7 children all attending sessional care, aged between 3 years and 4 years. In the afternoon session, there was 1 staff member working with 6 children aged between 3 to 4 years, all attending sessional care.

- In the Preschool 1 room in the morning, there were 3 staff working directly with 18 children aged between 3 to 4 years, 2 children attending sessional care and 16 children attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working directly with 12 children aged between 3 to 4 years.
- In the Montessori 2 room in the morning, there were 2 staff working directly with 14 children aged between 4 years to 5 years, all attending sessional care.
- In the Preschool 2 room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 21 children aged between 4 to 5 years, all attending part time or full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 15 children aged between 4 years to 5 years.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the management structure displayed on the reception notice board.

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic Needs:

- There were a vast majority of toys available to the children in each room. Children had free access to these toys throughout the day of inspection. These included puzzles, blocks, dolls and cars.
- There were jugs of water available in each room for children throughout the day. Children were observed accessing these throughout their day.
- Staff were observant of children's needs and changed children's clothes when wet after snack time.
- Children were not rushed when eating their meals throughout the day. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time.

- The children had access to a rest area or cosy corner in each room. These consisted of a couch, soft matting, cushions and blankets. Children were observed to use these areas and give the choice to opt out of group activities to read books.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children cleaning their noses when required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it. Staff were observed supporting children with toileting training.
- Staff in the baby room were observed to regularly change nappies and ensure the children were clean throughout the day.
- During nappy changing, staff engaged in singing nursery rhymes and conversations with the children.
- The inspector observed the staff giving the children drinks of water in the baby room during the morning.
- Children were encouraged to independently feed themselves and staff provided support when necessary.
- The staff sat on the floor with the children in the baby room playing with and encouraging the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials and toys for example building blocks, practicing pincer grasp activities with clothes pegs.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to be supporting children's language development by naming colours, and numbers throughout planned activities and free play.
- Staff were observed to sit with children throughout the day and discuss foods they were eating or chat with them about the activities they were doing.
- Staff were observed sitting with children at nap time.
- Staff were assisting children to be independent with self-help skills and were available for support if required. This was noted in the Toddler room when staff asked children if they needed help with putting their shoes on.
- In the Wobbler room, staff were observed communicating in both English and Spanish with the children.

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 emergency exit/fire doors were observed to be unobstructed.
- The main entrance door was adequately secured which prevented unauthorised access by an unauthorised person or unsupervised exit by a child.
- The care rooms were observed to be free of sharp edges and corners were covered with edge guards.
- All cables were securely out of reach of children in the service.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children.
- The low laying windows were equipped with visibility strips.
- The baby room had six highchairs and were maintained in a safe and clean manner.

Infection Control:

- Staff were observed regularly cleaning tables after activities, before and after mealtimes.
- It was explained by staff that highchair straps are washed weekly onsite or when soiled.
- A supply of liquid soap and disposable tissues were available in the sanitary facilities.
- The play materials, resources and equipment were in good, well-maintained condition.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspector observed the staff conducted 10-minute physical sleep checks on children who slept in both sleep room on inspection with a written record of the child's position, breathing and colour was maintained.
- A staff member remained in the with the toddlers in the toddler room whilst settling a child to sleep. The staff member was rubbing the child's back whilst speaking to the child in a kind and comforting manner

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits remained unobstructed.
- Fire exit plans were displayed in each room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were broken toys and an outdoor playhouse broken in the outdoor area. The broken edge pieces posed a risk of harm to children playing in the outdoor area.

Infection Control:

2. There was a torn pink mat in the baby room, children were playing on this mat on the day of inspection. Due to the mat being torn, it is unable to be adequately cleaned and poses a risk of cross contamination and infection to the children.
3. After the nappy changing process, the hands of the children were not washed. This poses a risk of infection to the children.
4. There was one rusted and broken peddle bin the training toilet sanitary facility adjacent to the toddler room and was not suitable for use by children.
5. The bin in the nappy changing room was not foot operated. Staff were observed using this bin to dispose of nappies with their hands without handwashing afterwards. This poses a risk of infection and cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider assured the broken toys were removed from the outdoor area and will continue to complete outdoor risk assessments weekly going forward.

Infection Control:

2. The registered provider removed the torn mats in the baby room and replaced them with new ones. Staff will monitor the mats on the floor and complete checks on a weekly basis.
3. The registered provider has updated the department by stating the hands of children will be washed after nappy changing.
4. The peddle bin has been replaced and regular checks will be conducted to ensure they remain intact.
5. The registered provider provided a statement advising they will purchase a new foot operated bin. Staff will engage in hand washing after each use of the bin.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the outdoor area was submitted by the registered provider.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the new mat in the baby room was accepted by the department.
3. Photographic evidence of staff handwashing children's hands were submitted by the registered provider.
4. Photographic evidence of the new peddle bin was accepted by the department.
5. The statement provided by the registered provider was accepted.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and documentation submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) Up to date records of First Aid Responder (FAR) certification were in place for five of the adults and at least one of these adults was available throughout the hours of operation, as evidenced by the staff roster.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

It was acknowledged that three wall mounted first aid boxes were accessible. However, all of the available medium and extra-large sterile wound dressings and eye pad dressings were out of date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that new dressings had been purchased. Monthly checks of all first aid kits will be conducted by staff

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of dressings was submitted by registered provider.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and documentation submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 26 have been adequately addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (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

The registered provider ensured the following:

(b)

- All entrances/exits were secured to ensure that the unauthorised entry of an adult to the premises was prevented.
- All entrances/exits were secured to prevent the exit of unsupervised children.
- Visitor access was maintained and managed by using a sign in book and buzzer system to main office and baby room.

(d)

- The premises remained in a clean state.
- A cleaning schedule was available to view in each room and was updated regularly.