

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC310
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Name of Service:	Nurture Childcare Fairylawn
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Address of Service:	Fairy Lawn, Western Road, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 KP94
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Gallagher
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	92	PM	78
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork. T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter, M Burke
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).

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Description of service

Nurture Childcare Fairylawn is a privately owned full day care service that also provides part time and sessional care. It is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years. It also provides the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 8:00 to 18:00 each day, Monday to Friday. There is a school age service onsite. The service is located in close proximity to Cork city centre. The large three-story building offers seven care rooms that cater for children attending the early learning and care service. There is an entrance hall with a reception desk, two separate sleep rooms, nappy and changing facilities, lobbies, staff room, a catering kitchen and laundry. Some of the playrooms have direct access to one of the three outdoor areas available. There is parking available at the front of the building to facilitate collection and drop off.

Staffing

There are 24 adults attached to the service including the registered provider who is not service based but visits the premises regularly. On the day of inspection, there were 18 adults working directly with the early years children. There were two persons in charge along with the designated deputy person who were office based. An adult who was the services' chef was assigned to the kitchen. One staff member was not present on the day of inspection.

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

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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, persons 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,*

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- (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 has ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider along with both persons in charge and the deputy person in charge were on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that 13 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Twelve new staff members work directly with the children. One new cook works in the kitchen. A total of 13 files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for one staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Seventeen of the twenty-six required references were available from a past employer and had been validated.

(b) Nine of the twenty-six required references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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(d) Police vetting was required and available for seven members of staff as they had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

- (3)
Recruitment records demonstrated that vetting procedures were carried out prior to the thirteen adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4)
Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for 10 staff members. Two staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The chef did not require a qualification.

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

On the day of inspection, the following policies were examined:

- Healthy eating policy.
- Outdoor play policy.

The above policies were observed to contain the relevant details to meet regulatory compliance and guide staff in the safe care of 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

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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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

2.

On the day of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations.

The rooms were in operation as follows:

Morning:

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present
Baby Room	Full Day Care	10-22 months	6	2	2
Wobbler Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	13	3	3
Toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-4 years	15	3	3
Pre-toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	12	2	3
Classroom 2	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-5 years	17	2	3
Classroom 3	Sessional	3-5 years	10	1	1
Classroom 4	Full Day Care/Sessional	4-5 years	21	2	2

Afternoon:

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present

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Baby Room	Full Day Care	10-22 months	6	2	2
Wobbler Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	14	3	3
Toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-4 years	17	3	3
Pre-toddler Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	10	2	2
Classroom 2	Full Day Care	3-5 years	16	2	2
Classroom 4	Full Day Care	4-5 years	15	2	2

8.

The registered provider has ensured that there was a minimum of two staff at all times on the premises. This was evidenced through the staff roster and discussion with staff on the day.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) Basic needs:

- On the day of inspection, the staff working with the children were sensitive and responsive in their approach of and care of the children. For example, a baby in the baby room who had woken early from their nap and was still tired was offered toys by a staff member. When the baby refused the toys, the staff member instead sat on the floor with the baby and soothed them until they were ready to play independently.
- Children's toileting needs were attended to promptly and staff assisted children when necessary.
- Nappy changing time was observed to be a time used by staff to build trusting relationships with children. Staff were observed to speak and sing with children during these times.

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- Staff were observed to encourage independence. For example, staff were observed to encourage children to wash their own hands.
- The rooms were well laid out to encourage the children to move freely between the interest areas.
- Children were observed to play in the outdoor areas on the day of inspection. This was in line with the services outdoor play policy.
- Each care room was provided with a rest area for children to opt out of activities if they so wished.
- Age appropriate sleep equipment was available to all children, and it was observed that child led sleep was in practice.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Within the care rooms, low level units were in place to display interest items at the children's eye level.
- The materials on offer were age and stage appropriate to each care room. For example, in the older children's classrooms, a variety of Montessori equipment was available, while in the bay room, a variety of gross motor and sensory equipment was provided.
- Each care room was equipped with ample resources and equipment.
- Equipment appeared to be maintained in a state of good repair.
- Outdoors, the children were observed to engage with a range of equipment such as ride on toys, a water tray and slides. Additional resources included a sand tray, balls, climbing frames and playhouses.

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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

- A menu was made available to the inspectors which outlined the planned meals for each day.
- A healthy eating policy was in place and the snacks /meals observed were suitable, adequate, and varied.
- There was a weekly menu plan available on the notice board. It was reported to the inspector that this plan is sent to parents on Friday every week so that they can make suggestions or amendments to their child's planned meals
- Water was readily available to the children with snacks and between snack/lunchtime.
- Formula for babies was not prepared on site; it came ready made to the service and was refrigerated.
- Cooking was done on site, and all meals were provided by the service.
- On the day of inspection, shepherd's pie was served as the hot meal at lunchtime. Portion sizes were age appropriate and extra servings were available. The afternoon snack was homemade banana bread and yogurt.
- It was noted that mealtimes could be amended to suit children's needs with regard to sleep and rest.
- Children's dietary and cultural needs were catered for.
- Mealtimes were spread evenly throughout the day.
- Crockery was offered to children at each mealtime.
- All practices observed were in line with the services' healthy eating policy.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance had been secured, and this ensured no unauthorised entry to, or exit from, the service.
- All play equipment appeared to be in a clean state and of good repair.

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- Heavy equipment and furniture had been anchored to prevent injury to a child.
- All electrical cables or flexes observed were in good repair and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning materials were observed to be stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area had been securely fenced to prevent unauthorised entry to or from the area.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off the floor.
- Low level doors and windows were fitted with visibility strips.
- Windows in each care room had been made safe to prevent children from exiting or falling.
- Blind cords in each care room had been secured.
- Highchairs in the baby room were in a good condition and had been fitted with safety harnesses.
- Low level storage cupboards were secured with child proof locks.
- The stairway was well lit and fitted with suitable handrails.

Infection Control:

- Regular handwashing was observed on the day of inspection. Staff were observed to remind older children to wash their hands after the bathroom, after coming inside and before mealtimes.
- Each handwashing facility was fitted with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in operation throughout the service.
- Tables were sanitized before the children had their meals.
- Perishable foods were refrigerated.
- In the outdoor areas, sand trays not in use were covered.
- Staff were observed to wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies.
- Nappy changing practices were observed to be in line with the nappy changing procedure displayed in the service. Staff were observed to sanitize the mats after use, wash children's hands as well as their own and dispose of nappies safely.
- Wipes and barrier creams were individually labelled to prevent cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- A supply of fever reducing medication was stored safely by the service.
- Auto adrenaline injectors were stored safely, along with detailed care plans, out of reach of children.

Safe sleep:

- Frequent checks of sleeping children had been documented and were available for review. At ten-minute intervals, children's breathing, colour and position were physically monitored, as per the requirement for safe sleep practice.

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- Cots were maintained in a proper state of repair.
- Cot mattresses were clean and fitted correctly in each cot.
- A minimum space of 50cm had been spaced between each cot.
- Cots were fitted with mattress protectors to prevent the spread of infection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were kept free and unobstructed.
- Wall tethered fire extinguishers were available in each care room.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The registered provider has kept a written log of monthly fire drills. Through inspection of records, it was observed that fire drills take place monthly with the last recorded fire drill taking place in May 2026.

(b) The registered provider has kept a written log of all firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. It was observed that all firefighting equipment has been serviced and maintained. Maintenance records dates for the smoke alarm system were last available for May 2025; and for the fire extinguishers in January 2026. Evidence was available on the day that the smoke alarms were due to be retested before the end of May 2026.
- (c) The registered provider has ensured that all records relating to fire safety are stored safely and are open to inspection by authorised persons.
4. The procedure to be followed in the event of a fire is displayed prominently within each main care room.

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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

Compliance Information

(c) The service was adequately lit in all areas. All of the care rooms had large windows which allowed both natural ventilation and light. Temperatures within the service were sufficiently controlled to allow for a comfortable environment. Sleep areas which did not have openable windows were ventilated by means of an electronic system, as were the nappy changing areas.

(d) The service had been maintained to a high standard. A cleaning schedule was available for review for each area of the service. Staff were observed to clean as they went, and there were no areas observed to be in need of repair.