

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC365
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Name of Service:	Shournagh Childcare
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Address of Service:	Elmgrove, Shournagh Road, Blarney, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 W291
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edel Lyons
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	12/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	71	PM	60
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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

Shournagh Childcare is a registered privately owned early years service in operation since 1998. Opening hours are from 7.30am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

The service operates from a converted domestic house that has been adapted to provide an early years service. There are four care rooms in operation. These include the Yellow room, the Green room, the Blue room and the Red room. The service also includes a sleep room which is located adjacent to the Yellow room, adult and children's sanitary facilities, an office and a sensory room. The outdoor area is located to the rear side of the building and the Yellow room have their own outdoor play area beside the playground.

Staffing

There were 21 adults attached to the service. Of these 21 staff, 17 work directly with the children, the registered provider does not work in the care rooms, and there is an onsite chef who prepares the meals. There were two students completing their work placement present on 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

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 29; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 10. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 12 February 2026 for non-compliances with Regulation 9 as two adults working directly with the children did not hold garda vetting disclosures on file.

A response was received by the Early Years Inspectorate on 13 February 2026 which included one garda vetting for one staff member. The registered provider provided a response in relation to the other staff member with no garda vetting. This was response was deemed acceptable by the Inspectorate.

Further information detailed in report under Regulation 9.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge and childcare practitioners.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that four new adults had been employed since the previous inspection. On the day of inspection, 2 students were present on an educational work placement programme, 14 childcare practitioners, a chef and the registered provider. A total of six files were reviewed.

(a) Of the 12 references required, 10 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 12 references required, 2 validated reference was available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for four of the six adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for three of the six adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the three adults.

(4) The four adults working directly with preschool children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were not on file for two of the new staff employed to work directly with the children. The registered provider stated this was an oversight. This was identified on last inspection on 05 August 2025, where five staff members had been employed and were working directly with the children with no garda vetting disclosures on file. An Immediate Action Notice was given on inspection to the registered provider on 12 February 2026 detailing staff with no garda vetting present. The registered provider responded to the Immediate Action Notice on 13 February 2026 with evidence of a garda vetting disclosure in relation to one adult and that an application for garda vetting had been submitted for the other adult and this staff member will not be working until a disclosure is received. Not conducting garda vetting prior to adults working directly with children posed an immediate risk of harm to children in the service.

(3) The registered provider did not conduct file checks as mentioned above prior to adults working in the service. This posed a possible risk to the safety of the children. This was also identified on previous inspection on 05 August 2025. In response to previous non-compliance identified on last inspection, a checklist system was to be in place for management to ensure all required information and documentation is obtained prior to a new staff member commencing in the service. The actions taken by the service did not prevent the reoccurrence of the non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c) The registered provider applied for Garda vetting for the staff member promptly. The staff member was removed from the service until a garda vetting disclosure was received. A staff member has been appointed the role of overseeing all vetting processes within the service. This will be reviewed by the registered provider going forward.

(3) The registered provider stated that a staff member has been appointed the role of completing file checks and the vetting process during onboarding and renewals. The registered provider will be the second staff member to oversee the vetting processes.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(c) Photographic evidence of the garda vetting disclosure was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

(3) The statement provided by the registered provider was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance's identified under Regulation 9(2)(c) and 9(3) have been adequately addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

A review of the infection control policy was completed. It was identified that details including hand hygiene practice for staff and children was not available within the policy. Details on the safe management of perishable food and the infection control measures for nappy changing and toileting procedures to be followed were not set

out in the policy. Not ensuring that these details are included in the infection control policy does not support safe infection control procedures within the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider updated their infection control policy to included details regarding hand hygiene practices for staff and children. Meetings were held with the staff team to inform them of the hand hygiene practices and ensure they had a full understanding of the importance of following the correct policies.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated infection control policy was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 10 has been adequately addressed

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 Yellow room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 14 children aged between 1 year and 2 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 14 children.
- In the Green room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 19 children aged between 2 years and 3 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 18 children. One student completing work placement was also present in the room.
- In the Blue room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 19 children aged between 3 years and 4 years, 4 children attending sessional care and 15 attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 15 children. One student was also present in the room.
- In the Red room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 19 children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 2 months, 5 children attending sessional care and 14 attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 13 children.

(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 staff rota.

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:

- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the day.
- Parents/guardians provided a mid-morning snack for children attending the service on a sessional basis. Snacks included rolls, wraps, fruit and yoghurts.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.

- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.

Supporting relationships:

- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills for example; putting their own coats and shoes on and staff supported children when required.
- The staff in each playroom were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking the children and spoke to them at child level.
- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at mealtimes.
- Parents and guardians were updated electronically through a mobile childcare application and staff would communicate verbally at drop off and collection times.
- Staff were observant of children’s needs and were seen to comfort children when they were upset.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had an onsite chef who freshly prepared all meals in the service. Breakfast, morning snack, dinner and an evening snack were available. The menu caters for all food allergies and dietary requirements. The meals observed on the day of inspection were adequate and nutritious. Meals were served at appropriate times throughout the day, and snacks were available as needed. Children could ask for what they wanted in their meals. Breakfast included cereals, smoothies and toast. Snacks included fruit and crackers. Dinners included potato, vegetables and various meats with a choice of rice or pasta. Evening snacks included sandwiches and wraps. A choice of milk or water was also available.

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 to the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock and keypad, which reduced the risk of unauthorised entry of an adult or the unsupervised exit by a child.
- The release button to exit the main entrance door was out of reach for children and limited the risk of a child leaving the premises unaccompanied.
- All emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction.
- Blind cords were secured and out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- All perishable foods were stored in the refrigerator.
- Windows were open which allowed for fresh air circulation.

Administration of medication:

- The medication observed in the service was clearly labelled and in their original containers.
- Health care plans were available for each child that required one. Care plans were completed by the service and signed by both parents/guardians and staff.
- All medications were in date and staff explained they were confident in administering the medication.

Safe sleep:

- Staff in the Yellow room were observed conducting 10-minute sleep checks throughout the day. These checks included position of the child, breathing pattern of the child and colour of the child.
- Staff maintained constant supervision of children over 2 years sleeping on stackable beds in the Green room.
- The Green sleep room temperature was recorded at 21.0°C at 12.24pm where 19 children aged 2 years and over were sleeping on stackable beds.
- The Yellow sleep room temperature was recorded at 22°C at 12.46pm where nine children aged 12 months and over were sleeping in cots.
- Waterproof mattresses were observed in the cots in the Yellow room.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the room in the event they were needed.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The radio cable in the Blue room was not securely fastened out of reach of children. The cable was observed hanging over the children's seating area for their personal belongings. This posed a risk of injury to the children in the care room.
2. The children's anti-febrile medication was stored in the children's sanitary facility in the Green room. The medication was stored on a shelf in the area and was accessible by children in the room. Children could potentially access this medication while unsupervised. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Infection control:

3. The water temperatures recorded in the children's sanitary facilities on day of inspection exceeded 43°C. The temperatures recorded in two of the sinks in the Blue sanitary facilities measured 46.8°C and 48.5°C. The temperatures measured in two of the sinks in the Green sanitary facilities measured 46.1°C and 48.6°C. The temperature recorded in one sink in the Yellow sanitary facilities measured 46.3°C. Not ensuring water temperatures remained under 43°C posed a risk of injury to the child.
4. Handwashing practices observed throughout the nappy changing procedures in the service did not ensure effective infection control measures. Staff did not wash their hands or the children's hands after each nappy change. This posed a risk of infection to the child and staff member.
5. One staff member was observed to not change their gloves between nappy changes on the day of inspection. This staff member was observed leaving the sanitary facility with the gloves on and go outdoors. Two staff members were observed changing nappies with no aprons on separate occasions. This was also observed on the last inspection on 04 August 2025. The registered provider stated that following the last inspection, all staff were to wear aprons during the nappy changing process. The actions taken by the service did not prevent the reoccurrence of the non-compliance. Not ensuring the safe process of wearing gloves and aprons during nappy changes posed a cross-contamination risk to the child.
6. A play kitchen unit was stored in the Green sanitary facility on the day of inspection. Children were observed playing with the kitchen unit in the sanitary room while waiting for a nappy change. At a later stage in the inspection, it was observed that staff were storing three children's potties on top of the play kitchen when not in use. This posed a risk of infection to the child.

7. The pedal bin in the adult sanitary facility was broken. Staff had to hand touch the bin after handwashing. This posed a risk of infection to staff.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The registered provider removed the radio from the Blue room.
2. The anti-febrile medication which was stored in the children's sanitary facility in the Green room was moved to a higher shelf well out of the reach of the children. The registered provider ensured that staff were aware that medication should not be accessible to children.

Infection control:

3. The registered provider had contacted the plumber on how to reduce the thermostat control for the water temperatures. The registered provider reduced the temperatures of the water in the children's sinks.
4. Meetings were conducted with the staff to reiterate the importance of handwashing during the nappy changing process and discuss the updated infection control policy. A copy of the updated nappy changing procedure was given to the staff members to read.
5. All staff members were reminded the importance of the nappy changing procedure and following the policies. A full stock of aprons and gloves were replaced in each room.
6. The play kitchen was removed immediately from the sanitary facility.
7. The registered provider purchased a new bin for the adult sanitary facility.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the Blue room was sent to the Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the moved anti-febrile medication was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection control:

3. Photographic evidence of the thermostat control was sent to the Early Years Inspectorate.
4. A copy of the nappy changing procedure and infection control policy was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.
5. Photographic evidence of the aprons and gloves in nappy changing area was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.
6. Photographic evidence of the children's sanitary facility was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.
7. Photographic evidence of the bin was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance's identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(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 staff checked in and out each child attending the service. This was completed through the use of the service's mobile application. This was regularly completed throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The registered provider ensured that no person other than a child attending the service, the person dropping or collecting the child, staff or unpaid worker could enter the premises without being approved.

(b) A daily record of persons entering the premises was kept onsite and was available to the inspector.

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

- (2)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were safely stored in an easily accessible area by staff and securely out of reach of children on the premises.
- (b) The first aid boxes were available to the children in the event it was required at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) On discussion with the registered provider and from review of the staff rota, a staff member with First Aid Response (FAR) training was not available to the children and no staff member attached to the service had completed the FAR training. It was identified that two staff members with basic first aid training were available to the children at all times. Not ensuring a staff member with FAR training is available to the children at all times posed a risk to the safety and care of the children attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider booked FAR training for staff to attend. The registered provider has also booked another session in October for further staff to attend to ensure that there is a staff member with FAR training present on the premises at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the booking of the FAR training was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

(b) The service was maintained in a safe and secure manner. The entrance door was secured using a buzzer system to gain access. This prevented the entry of an unauthorised person or the exit of a child unsupervised. All visitors had to sign in and sign out of the service.

(c) The lighting in the service was maintained; the heating was maintained at suitable levels and ventilation was adequate throughout the service.

(d) The premises was observed to be clean and well maintained. Cleaning sheets were recorded throughout the building.