

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE053		
Name of Service:	Giggles Montessori Pre-School		
Address of Service:	O'Connell Street, Kilkee, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V15 VA02		
Name of Registered Provider:	Deborah Hickie		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	23/09/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	Á. McCarthy		
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	Not applicable		

Description of service

Giggles Montessori Pre-school is a sessional service located in Kilkee town centre, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday for thirty-eight weeks each year. The programme of care is facilitated in two interconnecting care rooms from 09:15 to 12:45 for children ranging in age from two to six years. The service is located in an adapted single storey premises. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

Three adults are employed by the service. On the 23 September 2025 the registered provider and two adults were present. The adults held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

23 September 2025

An Immediate Action Notice was issued under Regulation 9(2)(c). A mandatory Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one adult who was present in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. An adequate response was received and a copy of the vetting disclosures were submitted.

Acknowledgments

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

(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 and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults working by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Five references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)
One reference from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for two adults working in the service. 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)
International police vetting was not required in respect of the adults working in the service who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months.

(4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c)
A mandatory Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one adult who was present in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider please refer to additional information section above for further detail.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c)
Garda Vetting had been applied prior to the inspection and followed up on with phone calls and emails. Garda vetting disclosures have been received and assessed by the service and sent to the Inspectorate. Garda Vetting Disclosures will be applied for prior to staff commencing going forward and the recruitment policy has been updated. An adequate response was submitted within the required timeframe in relation to the garda vetting disclosure immediate action notice.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(c)
Garda Vetting Disclosures
Recruitment Policy

Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence the area of non-compliance under Regulation 9 (2)(c) is now resolved.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3)
The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained during the inspection. Three adults worked directly with the seventeen children in attendance.

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 of Children:

The programme of care was provided in two interconnecting care rooms and in the outdoor area to the rear of the building. The inspector observed the children’s learning, development, and well-being being supported by the adults. The adults interacted in a kind and caring manner with the children, responded to their individual needs promptly and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the programme of care. The adults cared for the children in a sensitive manner and responded promptly to the children’s cues for assistance. The children were supported to be independent in play, whilst using the toilet, caring for their personal belongings and at mealtime. The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions, and the adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the children’s individual preferences and capabilities. The children were supported in accordance with their preference on an individual level and as part of the group. Speech and sound development was promoted by all the adults during conversations and through games played. The adults and children sat together during mealtime and ate their healthy lunches and drank their beverages of water. This was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion and the adults modelled positive social behaviours.

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 to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate to protect the children within.
- The children’s arrival and departure times were recorded in record books.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in clean condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- Handwashing by children was encouraged and supervised by the adults.
- The children’s personal belongings were stored individually on hangers.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

- Fire drills were completed by the adults and children monthly.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable and identified by the adults working in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for two adults employed by the service. However, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Administration of Medication:

2. The administration of medication practice was at variance with the service policy. The policy detailed that any administration of medication will be documented in a record book and signed by a parent/guardian after the medication is given. The record reviewed on inspection did not include a parental signature after the medication was given.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting disclosures were retrieved and reviewed for the two adults and forwarded to the inspector. Garda Vetting Disclosures will be reviewed yearly.

Administration of Medication:

2. All staff are trained in First Aid Response. In accordance with the administration policy records will be signed in full. Pre consent was available, two staff members sign all medications. The parent immediately signed all medications on the day and after the inspection. Medication books have been updated to include the required particulars. Including signatures of staff and parents in relation to prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Records will be signed daily after medicine been given.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The required Garda Vetting Disclosures
Recruitment Policy

Administration of Medication:

Administration of medication policy.

Copy of the completed form and a copy of the new administration of medication form.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence the areas of non-compliance under Regulation 23 general safety and administration of medications are resolved.

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 adults had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
- (2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the care room adjacent to the outdoor area.
- (b)
The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The fire drill took place on the 11 September 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment took place on the 02 September 2025, and the smoke alarm system took place on the 02 May 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices were displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.