

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE103

Name of Service: Mountshannon Childcare Centre

Address of Service: Mountshannon, Co. Clare

Eircode: V94 YW95

Name of Registered Provider: Fiona Cahill

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 08/04/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	46
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	Á. McCarthy & J. Hayes
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 Not applicable

Description of service

Mountshannon Childcare Centre is a purpose-built community childcare service located in the village of Mountshannon, County Clare. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care. It operates Monday to Friday 07:30 to 18:00. School aged child-care is facilitated in the entrance lobby.

The building accommodates five care rooms, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and an enclosed outdoor play area at the rear and both sides of the service. The five care rooms included: the Rainbow room (age range: 1 to 2 years), the Bumble Bee room (age range: 2 to 2 years 8 months), the Sunflower room (age range: 2 to 3 years), the Butterfly room (age range: 3 to 4 years), and the Sweetpea room (age range: 4 to 5 years).

Staffing

Sixteen adults are currently employed by the service. On the 08 April 2025 the manager, eleven adults and an auxiliary staff member who prepares and serves the food were present during the inspection. The registered provider is part of the board of management and does not work in the service.

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) (2) (8)(a)

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

09 April 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.

A response was received on the 10 April 2025. The manager confirmed that the adult would not be working in the service until a Garda Vetting disclosure had been received and assessed. The manager advised that a copy of the Garda Vetting disclosure would be submitted to the inspectorate.

On 17 April 2025 a copy of the Garda vetting disclosure was submitted to the inspectorate by the service manager

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, adults 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)

On the 08 April 2025, the manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Seventeen files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the adults employed in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty-six references required in respect of the adults were sourced from a past employer.

(b)

Eight references required in respect of the adults were sourced from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures was available in respect of sixteen adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of one adult employed in the service where the person who had lived in another state for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

The adults who required childcare qualifications working directly with the children held Early childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 and Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure was not available in respect of one adult present in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. On the 09 April an immediate action notice was issue refer to additional information section for further information.

(d)

International police vetting with evidence of certified translation was not available in respect of one adult who had leaved in two different states for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2)(c)(d)

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Actions

(c)

An application for Garda Vetting was submitted on 2nd April 2025 and the vetting unit were contacted on the day of the inspection to check the status of the application. The staff member was not rostered in to work again until after Easter, so it did not affect staff child ratios. The new processed Garda Vetting was received on 17th April 2025. A copy was sent to the Tusla Inspector immediately.

(d) An Application was made for International Police Clearance for the staff member who had lived in two different states for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult. A copy of the completed Police Clearance has since been received.

(2)

(c)

Reminders are added to desktop to remind management two months before Garda Vetting expires to renew it. Any new staff members will not begin their role until completed Garda Vetting is on file to comply with regulations.

(d)

Going forward any new staff will have Police Clearance on file before beginning their new role to comply with regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the garda vetting and police clearance certificates.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence submitted by the registered provider the areas of non-compliance are addressed under Regulation 9 (2)(c) and (d).

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)
During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 08 April 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the service. Twelve adults worked directly with the forty-six children in attendance.
- (8)(a)
On the 08 April 2025 more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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 of Children:**
- The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, the adults used soft tones of voice and ensured they were at the children's level during conversations. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance and held and hugged them when comfort was needed. The infant's nappies were changed on an individual needs basis and the adults carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The staff supported the older children to be independent during toilet training and offered continuous praise and encouragement. The children's sleep needs were responded to appropriately and the adults remained in the sleep room to support children who required comforting to transition to sleep. Children who did not wish to sleep were provided with an alternative activity or moved to another room to play and learn in. Areas for rest and relaxation were provided for the children in the indoor areas with soft furnishings and reading materials provided in these spaces. A sensory area was available in the Butterfly room for children who required some time out from the large group activities. The children were observed to access the rest areas in the rooms during the day. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development.

The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time.

The adults promoted the children to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. Low level chairs with arm supports were provided for the younger children to ensure they could sit safely at the low-level tables for mealtimes. The adults sat next to the children and conversed amicably with the children during mealtimes. The younger children were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. The children transitioned to the lobby area for dining room at mealtime, these periods were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. Healthy nutritious food was prepared and cooked on the premises in line with the menu plan and the service healthy eating policy and the adults advised that additional food was available to the children if required. Drinking water was always freely available and accessible to the children in each room.

A key person approach was observed in each care room, the adults demonstrated a good level of knowledge of the children's preferences, personal interests, and individual capabilities. The adults followed the children's lead in the care rooms and the children were supported in individual and group play and encouraged to extend and develop their own specific interests. The rooms accommodated visual cards, and routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care. The children were notified in advance of any transitions and consulted in the delivery of the programme of care and learning.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments offered an enriching and challenging experience for the children in attendance. The five care rooms and the adjacent outdoor areas were bright, spacious and appropriately resourced for the age range and developmental level of the children. The rooms were laid out with designated interest areas, using natural materials and displaying the children's individual artwork, family photos and curriculum. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning. The children attending the Rainbow room were aged between one and two years and were encouraged to engage in sitting, standing and walking independently and with assistance. The room provided a space with a range of textures, surfaces, activities, and equipment including slides and climbing frame to support children's gross motor development. The children freely accessed the toys and

equipment on the low-level shelving. Soft play areas and activity units accommodated various toys and equipment such as pull and push along toys and a ball pool. Adult seating was available to support the adults to hold and comfort the children if needed.

The children attending the Bumble Bees room were aged between two and two years and eight months and were engaged in a range of play and learning activities in the indoor and outdoor areas. The children transitioned readily from sensory play using dried rice and Easter cuttings to their mealtime. The adults supported children with handwashing prior to mealtime. The room environment facilitated children's play with musical instruments, small world toys, dress up clothes, a well-resourced construction area and home corner. A relaxation area was provided with low level leatherette couch and a range of book where children were observed to sit and relax. The older children attending the Butterfly, Sweet pea and Sunflower rooms engaged freely with the toys and equipment and moved from the indoor and outdoor area at various intervals throughout the day. The children were observed to engage in gross motor physical activities, sensory activities using sand and water play, soft equipment play activities and a range of arts and crafts activities. Equipment and play materials were accessed freely by the children on low level units in each playroom. The adults communicated effectively to facilitate the programme and supported each child in their chosen activities.

The children attending these rooms led the programme of activities and their personal preferences were supported by the adults in the indoor and outdoor areas. Staff engaged in open ended discussions and singing exercises, played games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in experiments, sensory play. and singing songs. The children engaged in climbing, building together with large blocks, sensory play, ball games, pretend play, cycling on tricycles, using ride on vehicles. Individual learning journals were available for the children demonstrating their achievements and capturing their learning experiences.

The outdoor areas offered an inviting space for the children to freely explore and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, imaginative and constructive play. Each care room had access, all day to a designated outdoor space adjacent to their room. The covered play areas provided a large range of designated areas of interest with accompanying play and learning equipment and materials and were set up as an alternative outdoor playroom. The children had access to a large quantity of tricycles, balance bikes, ride on vehicles and bicycles. The children access these areas all year round and are provided with all-weather waterproof clothing and footwear. The outdoor area is secured by a high fence concrete wall and has gated access.

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:

A key coded, bell operated system, and a camera surveillance system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility. The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within. Unauthorised persons are recorded in the visitors' book. The children were supervised at all times during the inspection. Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children. The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service. Evidence of completed risk assessments were available demonstrating measures taken by the registered provider to maintain the service.

Infection Control:

The service was maintained in a clean condition. Completed cleaning schedules were available demonstrating measures taken by the adults to clean the service. The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. The nappy changing areas were adequately resourced. The observed nappy changes were completed in accordance with the service's infection control policy. A nappy changing procedure was displayed in the each of the nappy changing facilities. The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet and outdoor play and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication policy and procedure. Documentation was available for the adults to record medication administered to the children. Individualized care plans were available for children on prescription medication. The adults had received training, care plans and systems were in place for children who required prescribed adrenaline autoinjectors.

Safe Sleep:

The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy. The adults remained in the sleep room while the children slept. The children's sleep observations were recorded by the adults every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

The sleep room adjacent to the Rainbow room accommodated standard sized cots with wipeable mattresses for the children to sleep. Low level beds and individual blankets were available for the children who required sleep in

the toddler room. Individual cellular blankets were placed over the children during sleep periods. An electronic thermometer was available for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures.

Fire Safety:

The adults employed by the service had evidence on file of up-to-date fire safety training. The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction. The fire exits routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage. A fire action notice was displayed at all the fire exit points in the building. The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

The manager stated that outings are undertaken by the service. A risk assessment and outings checklist were available for completed outings. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the service's outings policy.

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)
Eleven adults had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and a record indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.

(2)(a)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in an accessible and conspicuous areas in each playroom in the service.

(b)
First aid boxes were 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 last fire drill took place on the 07 March 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 and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 08 November 2025 and 27 April 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice was 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 seventy-six pre-school children. The insurance policy for the full day care service was valid until the 27 March 2026.