

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE108
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Name of Service:	Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 CC89
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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:	18/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	32
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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:	A. 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).

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Description of service

Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre is a privately-operated, purpose-built service, located in Government buildings, on the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. The service operates on a full day and part-time basis, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. The service accommodates children ranging in age from three months to six years. Four care rooms were in operation. The rooms included: the Baby room (age range: one to two years), the Wobbler room (age range: two-year-olds), the Junior Montessori room (age range: three-year-olds) and the Senior Montessori room (age range: three to five years). Three designated outdoor play areas are located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

Fourteen adults are employed by the service. On the 18 May 2026, seven adults worked directly with the children. The manager and assistant manager provided an administrative role, relief cover and were involved in the preparation and serving of food. The registered provider 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

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This inspection was announced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child. The following regulations were inspected:

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

Regulation 11-Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 16(1) (h) (i) (j) (k)

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

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. 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.*

(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,*

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(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 18 May 2026 a manager was available, and an assistant manager was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager was available during the inspection.

(2)

Fourteen files were available in respect of the registered provider and thirteen adults currently working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty-six written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Two written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 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 six adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

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Fourteen adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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 18 May 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Nine adults cared for the thirty-five children in attendance in the morning and seven adults cared for the thirty-two children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h)
The pre-school children's daily arrival and departure times to and from the service were detailed on the service's electronic application system.
- (i)
A staff roster was available demonstrating the adults rostered hours on a daily basis and room assignment.
- (j)
Four Administration of Medication records were reviewed and adequately completed. These records detailed signed parental/guardian consent prior to medication been given.
- (k)
A sample of twenty-seven accident, injury and incident involving the pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. These forms were completed in full and included a signed parental/guardian signature after the accident/incident occurred.

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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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. Four care rooms were in operation, and the outdoor play areas were used by the preschool children.

Supporting Relationships Around 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, using soft tones of voice, the children's individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The adults offered praise and encouragement, and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group activities.

The children were observed to be fully engaged and were included in all activities in the indoor and outdoor environments. The children were encouraged to be independent, whilst caring for their belongings, during play-based activities, feeding and using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during toileting. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The babies and children were encouraged to feed themselves under supervision. Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable occasions where the children and conversed amicably with each other.

A key person approach was observed in operation in each care room, the adults demonstrated a level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests and individual capabilities. The children were notified in advance of any transitions and consulted in the facilitation of the programme of care. The adults followed the children's lead in the care rooms, and the children were supported in individual and group play. The adults in each room worked effectively to facilitate the programme of care and learning. During drop off and collection periods parents were given feedback in an informal manner. Parents/Guardians were notified of the children's daily activities and developmental progress through the service electronic application system. General communications are notified to

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parents through a text messaging system. Learning journals were available capturing the children's progress, activities and creative exercises.