

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE108		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 CC89		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ciara Gallagher		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/07/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	34	PM 34
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Á.McCarthy		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre is a privately-operated, purpose-built childcare facility, 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 for 52 weeks of the year. The service accommodates children ranging in age from three months to six years. Four rooms were in operation. These are called the Baby room (age range: fourteen months to twenty-three months), the Wobbler room (age range: one year to two years), the Junior Montessori room (age range: two to three years), the Senior Montessori room (age range: three to four years). Three designated outdoor areas are located to the rear and side of the building.

### Staffing

Fourteen adults are employed by the service. On the 10 July 2025, eleven adults worked directly with the children. The manager and assistant manager provided an administrative role, relief cover and the preparation and serving of food. The registered provider is supernumerary and was not present during 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:

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- 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

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 manager and assistant manager, 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

(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 10 July 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)

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

(a)

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

(b)

Three 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 fourteen 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 three adults employed in the service where the person 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 6 and Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications qualification or 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 10 July 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the service. Eleven adults worked directly with the thirty-four children in attendance.

(8)(a)

On the 10 July 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 adults 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. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development.

The adults sat next to the children and conversed amicably with the children during mealtimes. The children were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and unhurried occasion. Healthy nutritious food for two meals was provided by an external company and reheated on the premises in line with the menu plan. Additional food was available to the children if required. Drinking water was available and accessible to the children in each room and in the outdoor area.

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.

### 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 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 signed in and out on arrival and departure to and from the service.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.
- Visibility strips were placed on the window panels in the hall adjacent to the preschool rooms.

##### Infection Control:

- The childcare facility 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.
- The adults had received training; care plans and systems were in place for children who required prescribed medication.

### Safe Sleep:

- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.
- The adults remained in the room while the children slept. The children's sleep observations were recorded on the childcare application system by the adults every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.
- The sleep room adjacent to the baby room accommodated seven 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 wobbler and junior Montessori rooms.
- 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. The room temperatures ranged from 18 to 18.8 °Celsius. Air conditioning units were in place in the sleep rooms and care rooms.

### 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 point were readily identified with signage.
- A fire action notice was displayed at all the fire exit points in the building. Illustrated child friendly fire evacuation procedures were displayed in each care room.
- 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 with the children in the senior preschool room.
- A risk assessment and outings checklist were available for completed outings. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the service's outings policy.