

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW037
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Name of Service:	Little Fairies Creche and Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	Slaney Valley Business Park, Bunclody Road, Tullow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 YR6H
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Byrne
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	21/05/2025
	22/05/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	53
	AM	65	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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
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Description of service

Little Fairies Creche is registered to provide a full day care service to children aged from 6 months to 6 years of age. The service is open from 07:30 to 18:00. The service is operated from a newly constructed premises which is a purpose-built preschool facility. It consists of six preschool rooms. On the ground floor there is Little Fairies room, to cater for children from 6 months to 1 years of age, Little Pixies room, to cater for children aged 1 to 2 years of age and Little Elves room, to cater for children 2.5 to 5 years of age.

There are a further three preschool rooms situated upstairs. Fireflies room for children 2 to 3 years of age, Little Gnomes room for children 2.5 to 5 years of age. The Neverland room situated on this floor and is predominately used as a relaxation room for children. There are three designated sleep rooms, toilets, staff toilets and nappy changing facilities on the premises. There is a fully equipped on site kitchen to provide meals and snacks for the children. There is an office and staff room on the first floor. There is a large outdoor play area which surrounds the service on three sides.

Staffing

There are 14 staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

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

Regulation 10 Policies and Procedures,

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 15 Record of preschool child,

Regulation 17 Information for parents,

Regulation 19 Care and welfare of the child,

Regulation 22 Food and Drink,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,

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

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (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.

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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The manager was the designated person in charge both days of the inspection. The registered provider was also present on both days to facilitate the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 14 staff employed in the service including the registered provider. All staff files were reviewed on the second day of inspection. All required written and validated references were available on file in the service.

- (c)
There was evidence of Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff.
- (d)
Police vetting was available on file for two staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff who were working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)
The registered provider had ensured that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and training to carry out their duties in the service. There was evidence regarding the induction policy and training schedule for staff who were starting work in the service. This included a check list of training required for new staff prior to working directly with the children. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they had regular staff meetings where they were given information in relation to any issues in the service.

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.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the administration of medication policy and the policy on behavior management in the service. These policies and procedures were specific to the setting.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children at all times on both days for the duration of the inspection.

DAY 1

(2)

In the morning there were 65 children with 10 staff.

In the afternoon there were 53 children in the care of 9 staff.

DAY 2

In the morning there were 65 children with 9 staff.

The registered provider and the manager were available on both days of the inspection and were available to assist across the rooms as required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*

- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 12 children's enrolment forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

There was information for parents on the running of the service. This information was available in a hard copy for parents. The copy was reviewed by the inspector. The service provided parents with information as required under regulation 17. The information booklet provided for parents contained an outline of the curriculum, the hours of operation, contact details and the facilities available within the service. There was also information included on the day to day running of the service and how to contact the registered provider.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of activities during the inspection including eating together. For example, in little elves children had a jobs rota. Children were assigned tasks such as putting out the place mats for dinner and setting the table with the plates and cutlery for their friends.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were observed being encouraged to put away their toys and books when they had finished playing with them. In the little pixies room children were observed making play dough with a staff member. Children were observed having fun mixing the flour and adding the additional ingredients. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they encouraged children to enjoy sensory play as part of their emerging interest planning in the room.

Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care in the outdoor area. Children from the little fairy's room were brought out to play frequently on both days of the inspection. Children were observed enjoying a wide range of toys and equipment on offer such as balance bikes, tractors and jungle gyms.

The materials and equipment available included a range of Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area which was structured to develop children's curiosity and desire for sensorial play.

Of note was an enclosure in the outdoor area which housed two goats named Tayto and Ozzie. The goats had their own house and space to run around in the enclosure. Children were observed feeding the goats with the supervision of staff. The children took delight in telling the inspector all about the different tricks the goats were capable of such as standing on the roof of their house and calling to the children.

There was a large outdoor classroom which was open to the play area on one side. This classroom was equipped with tables, chairs and play equipment. Staff who spoke to the inspector this area facilitated outdoor play for the children even when it was raining.

There was a large sand pit covered with a roof so that children could play even if it was raining, an outdoor kitchen, picnic tables, a large jungle gym with ladders and a slide and other equipment to support imaginative play were also available in this area. There were ride-on toys provided to facilitate gross motor play. There was a mixture of ground covering to facilitate all the ages and stages of the children attending the service. There was artificial grass directly outside the baby room (little fairies). There was a concrete surface for the children to play on the ride on toys, and a large area which was covered in natural grass for the enjoyment of all the children.

(1)(b)

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Nutritious and varied food was offered to children at regular intervals throughout the day and extra portions were readily available. Food choices were appropriate for children's individual dietary needs. Mealtimes were relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as staff engaged with them, helping them when required. For example, dinner time was observed in little fairies. Children were seated in comfortable and good quality chairs. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and were helped when needed.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. Staff were observed to be attentive to the children talking and singing to them during the procedure. Staff had placed stickers over some of the nappy changing units to entertain the children while they were having their nappies changed. Staff were observed washing their hands before and after the procedure. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Care was given to children's appearance as bibs were put on younger children before eating and their hands and faces were cleaned afterwards.

Sleep requirements were reflective of children's individual needs. The children's position, colour and breathing were observed and recorded every 10 minutes. Staff in the baby room communicated with parents at collection and drop off. There was a system in place in the little fairies room where the routine was documented daily in note books which went home with the babies.

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 promoted healthy eating and had a healthy eating policy. There was a 3-week rotating menu on display in the service for parents to view in the corridor beside the kitchen. Most of the snacks and all meals were prepared in the service. The parents of the children who were attending the little elves room supplied the children's morning snack. Meals were prepared by a staff member. The dinner was served at mid-day and consisted of minced beef, potatoes, carrots, broccoli and gravy. There was a plentiful supply and children who wanted extra servings were given extra portions. The children were served hummus, bread sticks, cucumber and yogurt in the afternoon. The food provided was prepared and served to meet the stages of development of the children. For example, the food for younger children was a mashed/lumpy texture and the older children's dinner was served whole. Water was provided for the children to drink in all the preschool rooms.

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

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was made of glass. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service. The openings of the windows were restricted with appropriate restrictive opening devices. All radiators were thermostatically controlled and were purposely built to include protective coverings. The fire doors were not obstructed.

Infection Control

The service was clean with no maintenance required. Staff were observed to be vigilant helping children to wash their hands on the days of the inspection. For example, before eating, after messy play and after toileting. Nappy changing procedures observed on the day were in line with the services nappy changing policy. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. Mouthing toys

and soothers were washed and sterilised daily. The nappy changing policy was on display in all nappy changing units in the service.

Administration of medication

The service had an administration of medication policy. The policy was reviewed by the inspector and was found to contain the required aspects for the safe administration of medication in a preschool setting. A sample of medications which had been administered in the service was reviewed by the inspector. The documents were in line with the services policy. Consent was signed by parents, and the administration was signed by two staff members.

Safe Sleep

The service had three designated sleep rooms; one located within Toddler room one two located on the ground floor. Bed linen for each child was stored in labelled baskets and was laundered weekly and as required. Staff were observed recording observations on the sleeping children. The sleeping children's colour, position and breathing rate was observed and recorded every 10 minutes. Staff played gentle music in the rooms to create a calming atmosphere for the children.

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)
There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children. There were seven staff trained in a first aid responder course working in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.

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 firefighting 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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in the service in May 2025.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2024 and smoke alarm was last serviced in May 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the number of children who were present on the day of inspection.