

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL007		
Name of Service:	Bundoran Community Childcare		
Address of Service:	Bundoran Retail Park, Station Road, Bundoran, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F94 HF65		
Name of Registered Provider:	Louise McGrath		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	11/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM 23
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Killeen		
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

Bundoran Community Childcare is a community run early years' service. The service operates from a purpose-built facility and is located within the retail park in the town of Bundoran, Co. Donegal. The service caters for children aged 0-6 years, operating from 8am to 5:45pm five days per week. There are four care rooms, two sleep rooms, two nappy changing rooms, sanitary accommodation for children and adults, a kitchen, an office, a sensory room and a dining room within the building. An outdoor play area is available to the side and rear of the building. A school age service is also provided.

Staffing

There is a total of eighteen adults employed within the service, which includes one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model, one administration staff, a cook and the early years manager. Of the eighteen adults employed a total of sixteen work directly with the children. All staff who work directly with the children hold the required Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to a minimum of Level 5 and above in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,19,23,24,25,27 and 28; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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)
The registered provider ensured that.
- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service. Staff in each room were aware of room leaders and there was a clear pictorial staffing structure in the main entrance hall.
- (2)
On the day of inspection, fourteen adults were present, the register provider, ten adults who were employed to work directly with the children, one adult in a supernumerary role a cook and one staff working with school age children in a summer Camp.
- The following vetting information was available for eighteen adults:
- (a) Thirty written validated references from past employers for eighteen of the adults.
 - (b) six written validated references from reputable sources for one of the adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eighteen staff. 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) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4)
Sixteen of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

(8)
The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample review of attendance records.

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

- The indoor area was arranged to support sensory experiences through arts and crafts and a sand tray. Fine motor skills were encouraged with jigsaws, shape sorters, crayons, and drawing materials. Gross motor development was supported with ride-on toys, climbing equipment, and an outdoor area for ball play
- The playrooms were warm and inviting, providing a suitable and stimulating environment for preschool children. It was thoughtfully organized into clearly defined interest areas, which the children eagerly explored throughout the session.
- Each of the three rooms featured defined interest areas with low-lying shelves stocked with developmentally appropriate materials suited to the age group of the children. The baby room featured child-sized couches, soft matting on the floor and wall in a defined area, a library corner, a ball pit, toy cars, fidget toys to support dexterity, and a chalkboard for mark-making activities.
- The toddler room featured child-sized tables and chairs, along with a large wooden boat furnished with soft cushions and a selection of books was available in the reading area which supported children's language and development.
- The outdoor area provided an alternative learning environment, with direct access from the indoor space. On the day of inspection, children moved freely between indoors and outdoors at their own pace. The area is partially covered, allowing for play in changing weather conditions, and is fully enclosed for safety. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was available, including slides, swings, child-sized tables and chairs, and soft, absorbent matting beneath climbing equipment to support safe, energetic play.
- A variety of multi-sensory experiences were provided in the outdoor area, including sand and water tables. These supported the children in engaging in meaningful play experiences and encouraged open-ended discovery.
- The service promoted healthy eating and food, and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. there was a four-week menu in place. The food was supplied by the service and made fresh daily. The morning snack was served at 10.08 and consisted of toast with butter, strawberries, bananas, oranges and melon. At

12.48 children were observed eating cheesy bolognaise bake, an alternative meal for one who did not want the pasta was offered. Young children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development. The evening snack consistent of cereal, milk, apples, melon, grapes. Children's drinks were available in individual beakers within their reach throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.

- During mealtimes, staff sat at the table with the children, engaging in conversation and singing to create a relaxed atmosphere. They sat at the children's level, assisting younger children with eating and encouraging older children to feed themselves.
- There was access to a family size couch in the two of the preschool rooms for staff to be able to comfort and the children seen resting and playing on.
- Staff demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions, as observed in the baby room when a child was distressed during drop-off. A staff member got down to the child's level, used soft tones, and offered toys of interest, providing reassurance that his mother would return later
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities daily and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wished.
- Both the outdoor and indoor play environment facilitated the staff and children to play in small and large groups. Each playroom opened out into the outdoor area and these doors were left open throughout the day. The children could access the outdoor as they chose.
- Sibling interaction was supported through planned opportunities during mealtimes in the kitchen. Two sets of siblings were observed choosing to sit together and engaging in conversation.
- In the toddler room, staff supported turn-taking at the sandpit and with various toys. One staff member got down to a child's eye level to gently explain why his friend felt upset when the toy was taken, helping the child begin to understand others' feelings.
- Staff were observed speaking with parents at drop-off and collection times. staff emphasized the importance of parental engagement with the service, including participation in parent days. Daily communication is maintained through an electronic application that provides live updates on children's food intake, sleep, activities, and other relevant information. Children's learning records are also accessible through this platform, allowing parents to view and print photos and learning stories.

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:

- On arrival, the external doors were securely locked, effectively preventing unauthorized access and ensuring children could not exit unnoticed.
- A buzzer system was in place to manage controlled entry to the service.
- All internal doors were appropriately secured, restricting children's access to potentially unsafe areas.
- Exit routes in all playrooms were clear and unobstructed, supporting safe evacuation if necessary.
- Internal blinds were securely fitted and positioned out of children's reach, minimizing risk.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to preschool children during the inspection, maintaining safety standards.
- Cleaning schedules were in place within the service.
- All indoor toys and play equipment were safe and in good repair, promoting safe play.
- Storage facilities were kept inaccessible to children, contributing to a safe and organized environment.
- All cleaning agents were stored securely, out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, contributing to a hygienic environment.
- Tables and highchairs were cleaned before and after mealtimes in the kitchen, demonstrating good hygiene practices.
- Thermostatically controlled warm running water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Sanitary facilities were clean, well-maintained, and were mechanically ventilated.
- Child-friendly handwashing posters were displayed beside sinks, promoting good hygiene habits.
- Nappy changing procedures were clearly displayed in the designated area.
- A supply of disposable gloves and aprons was available, and foot-operated pedal bins were in use to support hygienic waste disposal.

- Staff were observed disinfecting the nappy changing area after each use, ensuring a clean and safe environment for all children.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day of inspection, no child was on medication. Medications were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- The staff demonstrated to the Early Years Inspectors a strong understanding of best practices regarding the safe storage, administration, and documentation of medication within the service. During the inspection, staff presented the anti-pyretic (fever-reducing) medication stored on the premises. Each medication was individually labelled, with expiry dates clearly marked and regularly checked.
- Suncream was observed to be applied to children by the staff as required due to the hot weather.

Safe Sleep:

- The service provides two designated sleep rooms to support the rest needs of children under 2 years of age. One sleep room is located adjacent to the baby room and the other is situated across the hall. These rooms are equipped with four and three cots respectively, each designated for individual use.
- In addition to the infant sleep provision, the service also maintains eight stackable beds to accommodate the sleep needs of older children, ensuring all age groups have access to appropriate rest facilities in line with best practice guidelines.
- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness. Older children had designated relaxation areas if needed.
- The service had safe and comfortable spaces for the younger children to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, explore and to be protected from children who were more mobile.
- Sleep records were kept for each child's sleep provision, recording the time a staff member physically checks a child, and were recorded on an app for parents to view in real time. Additionally, the records included a sleeping child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the sleep room.
- A supply of clean linen was provided for each child and stored and laundered in the service.
- Age /tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets that allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 2 years of age.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. During routine safety checks in the baby room, the inspector observed that one of the cots had a broken slat on the base, posing a potential risk to any child placed in it. The inspector immediately alerted the staff present in the room and turned up the mattress to ensure the cot would not be used. However, during a later observation of the sleep room, the inspector noted that a child had been placed in the same damaged cot. This was brought to the immediate attention of the staff, and the child was promptly removed. The cot was then taken out of use.
2. During the inspection, it was observed that the climbing frame located outside the baby room had rusty nails protruding from the wooden structure. While it is acknowledged that the steps to access the climbing frame had been removed from active use to prevent children from climbing on it, the area remained accessible to children's hands, posing a potential safety hazard
3. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

4. It was observed during the inspection that three cot beds did not have waterproof mattress covers in place. The absence of waterproof covers poses an infection control risk, as it may lead to contamination and difficulty in maintaining a clean and sanitary sleep environment for young children.
5. During three separate nappy changes observed, staff did not consistently follow the service's nappy changing procedure—children's hands were not routinely washed, and on one occasion, a disposable apron was not used, posing a potential hygiene risk

Safe Sleep:

6. It was noted in the baby sleep room that temperatures fluctuated throughout the day. It must be acknowledged that it was an exceptionally hot day, and fans were available in both sleep rooms. Temperatures were recorded in Baby Sleep Room 1, Baby Sleep Room 2, and the Toddler Room.

Baby Sleep Room 1

01.36-22.5°

01.39- 21.9°

01.41-21.8°

Baby Sleep Room 2

01.44- 22.4°

01.45-22.3°

01.54-22.6

Toddler room

02.03-22.7°

05.05 22.0°

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A new cot was purchased to replace the broken cot. At a team meeting the risk management policy was collectively reviewed. The register provider highlighted that any safety risks (e.g. the broken slat in the cot) should be reported immediately so it can be repaired or replaced.
2. A new swings and slide set has been installed. At a recent team meeting a review of the risk management policy took place. It was also noted that as an extra safety precaution, plastic fencing would be placed around the structure to avoid children being hit by the swings.
3. A new garda vetting application has been submitted. All expiry dates will be clearly marked at the beginning of each year's diary and aim to reapply at least three months before current vetting expires. This was also highlighted at the recent team meeting.

Infection Control:

4. There was an insufficient supply of waterproof mattress sheets. Six new sheets were purchased, and additional ones ordered to ensure availability during laundering.
5. Staff were reminded that children's hands must be washed after each nappy change and that disposable aprons must be changed after every nappy change to prevent cross-contamination. A review of the nappy changing policy confirmed these procedures

Safe Sleep:

6. Extra fans were placed in the rooms to help with bringing down the room temperature. Children were put in bed with minimum clothes and a light cellular blanket. The following day the outside temperatures were not as high, and room temperatures returned to normal. The Register Provider contacted the

company that recently supplied and fitted the air to water heating system-Northern Refrigeration Ltd. They are coming to service the system and advise how to control the core temperature of the building from the boiler room. This will allow the temperature gauges in each room to be individually controlled to avoid the temperatures exceeding recommended levels in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence and minutes of a team meeting involving all staff were submitted by the registered provider as part of the documentation reviewed following the inspection.
2. Photographic evidence and minutes of a team meeting involving all staff were submitted by the registered provider as part of the documentation reviewed following the inspection.
3. A new Garda Vetting application has been applied for. The register provider confirmed that expiry dates will be clearly marked at the beginning of each year's diary.

Infection Control:

4. The registered provider confirmed the purchase of six new waterproof mattress sheets, with additional sheets ordered to ensure a consistent supply during laundering. An invoice was submitted as evidence of purchase.
5. Staff were reminded that children's hands must be washed after each nappy change and that disposable aprons must be changed after every nappy change to prevent cross-contamination. A review of the nappy changing policy took place at the recent team meeting. Minutes of the staff meeting were submitted confirming this discussion.

Safe Sleep:

6. Minutes of team meeting were submitted. The register provider contacted the company that recently supplied and fitted the air to water heating system, and they are coming to service the system and advise how to control the core temperature of the building from the boiler room.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

1. A record was maintained of all children of their times of entry and departure in the service daily.
3. The staff in each room is responsible for checking in and out all preschool children and this is recorded on a real time application.
(b)The registered provider has ensured that no unauthorised person is allowed access to the preschool children and that a record is kept of any authorised person entering the service.
4. A visitors' book is maintained within the service, and the details specified in paragraph (3)(b) are duly recorded. Upon inspection, it is confirmed that the information in the visitors' book is retained for the duration required by the relevant regulation.

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. The service provided evidence that there were persons trained in first aid for children always available to the children attending the pre-school service.
2.
 - a) There were 2 first aid boxes which were safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position.
 - b) The service demonstrated that the two first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the inspection, the required ratio of qualified adults to children was maintained, ensuring that every child was under the supervision of a qualified staff member. The staff were observed positioning themselves within the rooms to allow them to engage effectively with the children, offering supportive and attentive supervision. During mealtimes staff sat closely with the children at the table's, ensuring help was given when required. The outdoor area was designed to ensure that the children can be kept within sight and sound of the staff.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Supervision in the toddler rooms did not meet regulatory requirements on the day of inspection. The inspector observed a child climbing unsupervised up the steps in the nappy changing area and onto the nappy changing unit, creating a potential safety risk. This was immediately brought to the attention of staff, and the child was promptly removed from the area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider addressed a supervision concern with the staff member involved on the day of inspection and highlighted the dangers of inadequate supervision. At the team meeting, Regulation 27 – Supervision was discussed at length. It was acknowledged that the incident represented a serious safety issue. To prevent recurrence, a safety gate was installed inside the first door to prevent children from accessing the steps alone. At least one staff member will always maintain full attention on the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence was submitted showing that a safety gate had been erected. Minutes from a recent team meeting were also provided, confirming that a supervision concern had been discussed with all staff.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 60 children up until 27 March 2026.