

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR171
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Name of Service:	Absorbent Minds Ballintyre
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Address of Service:	1 Ballintyre Walk, Ballinteer Avenue, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Annmarie Hendrick
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate- Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, County Dublin. A96P3Y6.
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Inspection undertaken by:	O Quill
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Absorbent Minds Ballintyre was established in 2015 and is one of two services owned and privately operated by the registered provider. The early years service is registered to provide full day care, part-time including sessional care and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for children ranging in age from 2 years to 6 years. Opening hours are 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

In total nine staff are employed to work in the service. One staff member is employed for ancillary duties. On the 30 April 2025, seven staff were present in the service including the manager and deputy manager. Five staff worked directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly 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 may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

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

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels

- 15 (1)(a)-(i) Record of a pre-school child
- 19(1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child
- 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
- 25 (1) First aid.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1)(a)-(i).

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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) The inspection included a review of files for new staff employed since the last inspection on the 06 November 2023. In total three new staff were employed. The inspection also included a review of Garda vetting for all staff. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Six written validated references were available from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff employed in the service. There was evidence to demonstrate Garda vetting for staff had been renewed within the three-year timeframe as required by the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(4) Two new staff employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) The required police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) There was no evidence available to demonstrate one of the adults employed held the required qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The correct police vetting was obtained from the staff member. The correct police vetting will be sought from anyone new joining us that has lived outside of Ireland for longer than 6 months. This is part of our recruitment policy.

(4) A letter from Dundrum College was obtained confirming the completion of the level 5 course in Early Learning and Care stating that the certificate is to follow. The certificate will be added to the staff members file as soon as she receives it.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of police vetting. Letter from College

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence has been submitted in keeping with the corrective actions stated. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 31 children attending the service being supervised by 5 adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured at least two adults are on the premises at all times as evidenced by the staff roster.

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

- (1) A sample of twelve records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.

- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The record available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
- (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the pre-school. The service had a healthy eating policy and the daily menu was displayed on the notice board in the main hall. Staff stated morning snacks are provided daily by the parents or guardians of the children who avail of the ECCE scheme. For children attending part-time and full day care hour all snacks and a hot meal is provided by the service. An external catering company is used to supply the main meal and re-constituted on site. Drinks were accessible to the children in the care rooms at all times. The atmosphere at mealtime was calm and relaxed children engaged in conversation and were given time to enjoy their food.

Older children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection. Children requiring nappy changes were changed when required. Staff demonstrated warmth and kindness during interactions observed by the inspector. This included supporting children, offering reassurance and praise during play. The children appeared happy and content at their play and they enjoyed various tabletop including an activity based on the theme of the week 'recycling'. When the activity was completed, staff displayed the children's artwork on the wall. The children moved freely and were provided with freedom of choice in the materials they wished to use. The rooms were laid

out with designated areas of interest including home corner's, construction toys, a library area and rest areas. Each area was well resourced. Staff reported the children present do not sleep but suitable low-level beds are available if a child is tired. Staff explained they communicate daily with parents as they bring and collect their children and the service uses a phone app to share additional information and photographs.

All children had an opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area and were dressed appropriate to the weather with sun hats and staff were observed to help children apply sun lotion before going out to protect their skin.

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:

The entrance door to the service and outdoor area was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen area and storage facilities were inaccessible to children. Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children. Fire safe window restrictors were present on the windows. Cord blinds were secure. No hazards were identified in the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

Children washed their hands at regular intervals including after outdoor play, using the toilet and prior to eating. Liquid soap thermostatically controlled warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. The nappy changing procedure was observed staff carried out all steps required for infection control purposes. Pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas. Staff maintained a record of cleaning and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the appropriate measures to be taken to safeguard children if medication was required. A sample of medication records were reviewed. The forms were completed correctly including the name and dose of the medication given, written parental consent and a second person signature.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed. Staff were familiar with the fire drill procedure. A record was maintained of the monthly fire drills. The last fire drill was completed on the 9 April 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the sanitary area off the Big room the toilet seat was loose posing a potential injury risk.

Infection Control:

2. In the Little room the cover on the child size sofa was torn and therefore could not be cleaned effectively for infection control purposes.
3. In the Little room there was a hole in the mat provided in the rest area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The toilet seat has been secured by a professional on 27/05/2025. The staff have been reminded to report any damage within the classroom and toilets along with our daily and weekly risk assessments.

Infection Control:

2. The sofa has been replaced. The staff have been reminded to report any damage within the classroom and toilets and a monthly check for this has been added to our assessments.
3. The mat has been thrown out and replaced. The staff have been reminded to report any damage within the classroom and toilets and a monthly check for this has been added to our assessments.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence has been submitted in keeping with the corrective actions stated. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff caring for the children had up to date certificates for First aid responder training which expired on the 07 December 2025 and 12 April 2026.