

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS054
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Name of Service:	Pathways Childcare Lucan
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Address of Service:	2 Liffey Valley Drive, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 DW71
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Name of Registered Provider:	Hayley Gilmore
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
Title:	Early Years Inspector(s)

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

Pathways Childcare Lucan is a privately owned service which was first established in 1999 under an alternate name, and has been operated by the current registered provider since June 2025. The service provides sessional care and education to preschool children aged 2 to 6 years across 4 care rooms. The programme of care is facilitated through a play-based curriculum, and the service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 16:00 each weekday, providing both a morning and an afternoon session.

Pathways Childcare Lucan is located in a residential area of Lucan, South Co. Dublin. The service operates from a two-storey residential property which has been purposely adapted for use as an early years facility. The service has a fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 6 staff members including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, 6 staff members were present including an adult participating in a work placement programme. The registered provider arrived at the service following the inspector's arrival to facilitate the 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:

- 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

(2)
Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that 3 adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 17th May 2023. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these 3 adults as detailed below.

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were 2 references each available for 2 of the adults which had been appropriately verified.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for 2 adults, as detailed under Regulation 23.
 - (d) Not applicable, the adults did not require international police vetting.

(4)
Documentation reviewed evidence that 2 of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. The third adult did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(a) (b) Although it is acknowledged that 2 references were available for one of the adults, the references had not been appropriately verified by the registered provider prior to the adult commencing work in the service.

(3)
Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing employment in the service, as detailed above.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

Telephone reference validations were completed for the staff member early the following week. A full checklist for/if any new staff are recruited has been created. It will be used for any future recruitment.

(3)

One person has been given the responsibility of staff files. They have been labelled and stored in individual folders to avoid any future issues.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 33 pre-school children attending the service being supervised by 6 adults during the inspection.

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

Staff stated the service has a healthy eating policy in place which is shared with parents at the beginning of the school term. Children took their lunches in from home and mealtime was observed to be calm and relaxed, with staff sitting with the children chatting and interacting throughout.

The routine and play experiences in some care rooms were observed to be child-led. Children throughout the service were visibly calm, content, and engaged in their play-based activities throughout the inspection. The adults were observed to have a supportive role in the children's learning and play, and children were invited to participate in organised activities. Independence was encouraged in the care rooms and staff supported children with putting on their own coats, tidying up following lunch and play time, and using the toilet independently.

The adults were observed to offer consistent praise and encouragement towards the children using soft tones and gentle language. Children's behaviour was managed in a positive and calm manner by staff who were observed to use explanations and encouragement to resolve conflicts. Children were given advance notice of transitions with ensued smoothly throughout the morning from one activity to the next.

Staff working in the service stated they availed of opportunities to communicate with parents and guardians at brief periods during drop off and collection times. Staff stated an online messaging application is also used to communicate information on activities and newsletters in the service. The care rooms were arranged into various defined areas of interest which were well resourced, providing the children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included home corners, construction areas, dress up, libraries and rest areas. The variety of materials and equipment offered a range of valuable and developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children. Play materials were all observed to be easily accessible to the children at all times on low level shelving units. Children's artwork and family walls with photographs taken in from home were displayed in the care rooms. Low level tables and chairs were provided suitable to the children's ages and stages of development.

The children had access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

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

The inspector found through observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard the children attending:

General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A child was observed to have whole grapes in their lunchbox during snack time in Room one which posed a choking risk to the child. It is acknowledged that the staff member present cut the grapes appropriately at the inspector's request.
2. The front door to the service was unlocked during the inspection from the inside posing a risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised. It is acknowledged that the door was locked as soon as the inspector brought this to a staff members attention and that no children were observed in the area unsupervised during the inspection.
3. A low-level window in Room one did not have a restrictor on it to prevent the window from being opened fully posing a risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised should they use furniture present in the care room to access the window.
4. An electrical cord from a portable phone was hanging in reach of the children in Room two posing a risk of harm to a child.
5. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for 2 adults.

Infection Control:

6. Two of the pedal operated bins in use to dispose of waste in Room four were broken and the bin in use in Room one was not pedal operated, posing a risk of cross contamination. Staff members and children were observed repeatedly handling these bin lids to dispose of waste including used nasal tissues.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. As part of staff training, the service discussed choking hazards. The service has given parents a note home to remind them on what could cause a potential risk in their child's lunch box. Staff have been closely monitoring all food that comes into the service. Parents will be informed if food cause a risk. A small utensil will be kept locked away from the children so if a staff member needs to cut fruit/food they can do so.
2. As part of a staff meeting, the staff were informed of the importance of locking the main door. A sign has been put up on the door and regular checks are carried out throughout the day to ensure the door is

locked at all times. A sign is on the door to remind staff to lock it. Regular checks are carried out by management to ensure it is locked throughout the day.

3. Restrictors have been fitted to both windows. The window can now only open 3 cm's. All windows in the service have restrictors on them, regular checks will be made as part of the monthly premises audit to ensure they remain in working state.
4. The electrical cord has been clipped away out of reach of any children. All cords that are at the children's level have been secured to the wall not posing any future risks. Regular checks as part of the premises audit will be done monthly to ensure all cables are safely secured.
5. Garda Vetting was attained for all staff within the 3 year timeframe. As the service provider has changed recently, the new provider had difficulties receiving the documents via email as a result of this, however the new provider was assured all vetting was completed and approved. It has now been obtained and is on file.

Infection Control:

6. Two new bins have been put into Room 4. The bins are pedal operated to eliminate any form of infection for children and staff. The Children and staff have been operating the bin with their foot only to remove any risk. A third bin has been put into Room 1 that is pedal operated; all bins are clearly labelled, and children are aware of what bin to use. All bins will be checked monthly ensuring they are working appropriately. Staff have been informed of the importance of this, and they will communicate with management in future if this issue occurs again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the service was adequately insured for the number of children registered to attend and the type of service provided.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School