

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS112
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Name of Service:	Sunflowers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Ballyowen Lane, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 WF44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynn O'Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	21
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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.
Inspection undertaken by:	O. Quill and E. Mulhern
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

Sunflowers Childcare is privately operated and registered to provide full day, part time and sessional education and care for children aged from one to six years of age. The service is a purposely adapted domestic dwelling in a residential area in Lucan, County Dublin. There are five childcare rooms available, four at ground level and one on the first floor with a designated sleep room. An outdoor play area is available for the children and is located to the rear of the premises. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. A sessional only service operates daily from 9.20am to 12.20pm for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

In total sixteen adults are employed in the service including the registered provider. There were twelve adults present on the day of inspection including the deputy manager. Eleven adults worked directly with the children.

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

The inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations.

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

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

16 (1) (i), (j) and (k) Record in relation to Pre-School Service.

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

25(1), (2) First Aid

26(1)(a)(b) and (4) Fire safety measures.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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)(a), (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. At all times the deputy person in charge was available on the premises.

(c) There was evidence of a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority. There was evidence that adults working in the service were well informed about their duties and the reporting lines in place.

(2) Five new adults were employed since the last inspection on the 27 June 2024. The inspection focused on records for these adults in relation to regulations (2)(a)(b) and (d), and (4). Records for all sixteen adults were inspected for regulation 9(2)(c).

(a) Ten written validated references were available from previous employers.

(b) Not applicable, as none of the references provided were from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda Vetting from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána was available for all adults employed in the service. Fifteen of these were dated within the previous three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) There was evidence available to demonstrate four adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education and one adult had a letter of eligibility from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to practice.

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 forty two children attending the service being supervised by eleven 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 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The staff roster was available and reflected the adults working in the service.
 - (j) Details of medication administered to children was available.
 - (k) A sample of eleven accident and incident forms were reviewed. The forms were completed as required and there was evidence that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

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 was secured to prevent unauthorised entry and to prevent children exiting unsupervised. A keypad access control system was used by staff to access the premises. The outdoor area was secure with a high wall and the gates were secured.
- There were no hazards identified in the indoor or outdoor environment.
- Medication was clearly labelled and stored out of reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible.

Infection Control:

- The service maintained a cleaning schedule.

- Adequate spacing of 50 centimetres was maintained between cots. Each child had their own designated cot and bed linen was laundered as required.
- Nappy changing mats were maintained.
- Staff were observed to remove toys children mouthed and place in a box for sterilising.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children's hands were washed before eating, and after outdoor play. Soothers were sterilised as required. Foot pedal bins were in working order and used.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed. A sample of ten medication records forms were reviewed and completed as required.

Safe Sleep:

- A designated cot room was available with five standard cots. The room temperatures was maintained between 16 and 20°C. Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed. When spoken to staff were knowledgeable on the fire drill procedure.

Outing:

- The service has an outings policy. There were no outings conducted on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting available for one adult was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring Garda vetting to be renewed every three years.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Since the inspection we have received the updated Garda vetting. Going forward we will ensure we submit renewal applications in a timely manner prior to the expiration date of any vetting. Dates for renewal applications will be put on a calendar and reminders set.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy correspondence from Garda Vetting bureau submitted.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the 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.

(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) A person trained in first aid for children was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school. Two staff had First Aid Responder certificates that were valid until the 17 July 2026 and the 28 November 2025.

(2)(a), (b) A suitable equipped first aid box was easily accessible in a conspicuous position in each care room and available to the children attending the Pre-school at all times.

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 fire fighting 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 monthly record of fire drills available. The last fire drill was completed on the 23 April 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record for the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm was available. These were dated the 06 November 2024 and the 27 February 2025.
- (4) A notice for the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position on the notice board in the main reception.