

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY035
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Name of Service:	Bunny Hops Creche and Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	13 St. Brendan's Ave, Artane, Dublin 5.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Delaney
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Kerrigan and L.A. Webster.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Bunny Hops Creche and Montessori is a full day service that this is situated in a residential area of Dublin 5. The service offers care and education to children aged 1- 5 years and participates in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from an adapted residential property and is registered to be open from 07:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, however the service currently operates from 8am to 6pm.

The service consists of three care rooms: ECCE 1, ECCE 2/Montessori and Playgroup Room, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and a staff room/ office room. An outdoor enclosed area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs a total of seven adults to include the registered provider, five childcare staff, and a cook. Four staff were present in the service when the inspectors arrived, and one childcare staff member arrived at midday.

The cook was also present intermittently throughout the day.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 (k) Record in relation to the preschool service. The scope of the inspection included ECCE 1, ECCE 2, Playgroup rooms.

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 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,
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
 - (b) From discussion with management and review of the roster showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management showed that one staff member has commenced employment in the service since that last inspection in October 2024. The file of this staff member was reviewed in full.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that two written and verified references were available from a past employer.
 - (c) The registered provider ensured that Garda Vetting disclosures had been obtained for the one adult whose file was reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) The registered provider ensured that Police wetting was available in relation to the one staff member who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that one staff member who worked directly with the children held 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.

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

(2) The registered provider ensured that the ratios were maintained in the following rooms

- In the ECCE 1 room one adult was caring for eight children between the ages of 3 to 4 years old.
- In Playgroup Room one adult was caring for five children between the ages of 2 to 3 years old.

The registered provider worked in a relief capacity in the care rooms during break time and also provided support in the care rooms when needed.

(8) (a) A review of the staff sign-in book and through conversation with management indicated that there were at least two adults on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that there was an adequate number of adults to meet the need of the children within the service. For example:

- There was insufficient staff in the ECCE 2/Montessori room between the hours of 10:21 and 12:09, during the transition from play to mealtime children were observed to be instructed to sit for a period of time without activities or interaction or direction from an adult. The impact of this is outlined under the non-compliances in Regulation 19

(2) The registered provider did not ensure ratios were maintained in the ECCE/ Montessori room at all times during the day. The following was observed:

Time:	Ratio	Age range	Number of children present	Number of adults present	Number of adults required
10:21am-12pm	1:11 (during ECCE scheme)	4-5 years	12	1	2
12pm-12:09pm	1:8	4-5 years	12	1	2

Conversation with the adult present and review of rosters available showed that this room remained out of ratio for four days from the 4 May 2025, with records reflecting that one adult was caring for twelve children. This was a non-compliance noted in previous inspection in October 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has stated that a new staff member has been secured, and they are awaiting the required Garda clearance. A new staff member will be secured when needed.
2. The registered provider has stated they have secured a new staff member and will continue to advertise for staff when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Copy of CV attached.
2. Copy of CV from point 1

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 11.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (h) The registered provider ensured that there was a mechanism to record children’s daily attendance.

(k) A sample of ten accident and incident forms were reviewed and found to be fully completed.

(3) The registered provider ensured that records required above were present on the premises and available to the inspector on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (i) The registered provider did not ensure that staff rosters accurately reflected the presence of all staff working withing the service on the day of inspection and did not include the hours of work or break times of any staff member. This was a previous non-compliance in October 2024 and November 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (i) The registered provider stated that they will ensure the roster will reflect accurately all staff working in the service, there is a new sign in/out sheet to reflect the hours of working and break times for all staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) (i) Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 16.

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) The registered provider ensured the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service, for example:

Basic Needs:

- There was a rest area available in the care rooms if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- Children were provided with appropriate clothing and protection for outdoor play, staff assisted children with applying sunscreen and hats to ensure a safe and comfortable play experience.
- There was a cot room available with a sufficient number of cots.
- Water was freely available to children throughout the day.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to sooth a child in the Playgroup room who was settling into the service, warm soothing tones and physical comfort were used to reassure and comfort the child.
- Staff were observed to speak to each other in respectful and warm manner.
- Images of the children and their families were displayed throughout the rooms which promoted a sense of identity and belonging.

Physical and Material Environment.

- Child sized table and chairs ensured children were comfortable when engaging in tabletop activities and eating.
- There was a range of equipment available including mark making, a home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, costumes, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate creative play, cars and tracks for transporting and books to facilitate language and early literacy development.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment throughout the day. This is scheduled. This area had absorbent flooring, mud kitchen, playhouse, slide, wooden trains, scooters, giving options to develop gross motor skills.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Transitions in the ECCE 2 room were observed to be adult led and did not support children to move between activities in a child centred manner. For example:
 - Children were observed to sit at the table from 10:48am until 11:11am, when lunch was served. During this time children were observed to become restless and were not given an activity, frequently requested by the adult to remain seated. There was one adult caring for 12 children during this period. Well planned transitions provide children with a sense of comfort and reassurance.
2. There was a lack of consistency within the service promoting positive mealtimes. Mealtimes were observed to be functional in nature. In one care room, it was observed that one adult stood supervising the children's mealtime, children were prevented from talking with each other during this period of time or engaging in peer-to-peer interactions. Mealtimes provide an opportunity for adults to demonstrate pro-socialisation skills, while also giving opportunities to explore self-regulation in an informal manner.
3. The registered provider did not ensure that the sleep needs of individual children in the Playgroup room were prioritised within the service. At 1:56 pm it was observed that children were sitting at the table staring vacantly, place their heads on the table with their eyes closed, children were observed to frequently yawn and rub their eyes, whilst staff prepared them for outdoor play. When queried about sleep times staff stated that children are woken from sleep for snack time then outdoors to play, which follows the service daily planner. A flexible child led sleep schedule is necessary to ensure each child's need for rest is prioritised in order to maintain wellbeing.
4. The registered provider did not ensure that individualised sleep care plans were completed in conjunction with parents for each child, outlining the developmental rationale for a shortening of sleep times. This potentially prevents children becoming regulated in their sleep patterns.

5. A child in the Playgroup room was not supported in their toilet training journey, for example:
- At 10:45 a child was observed asking to go to the toilet during scheduled free play time, with staff stating she had a nappy on, staff did not act upon this child's request to use the toilet or change her nappy. The daily routine shows that nappy changing occurs between 09:00/09:30am and 12/12:30 pm. This child's bulky nappy was observed to be changed at 12:23pm. It is acknowledged that the service has had conversation with this child's parents around toilet training however the plan was vague. Children should be supported when showing awareness, an interest and being developmentally ready to establish positive toileting habits

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- The registered provider has stated that mealtimes are done in a child centred manner and children will continue to do activities until meals are served making transitions to mealtime more fluid.
- The registered provider has stated that more training has been given with particular emphasis on the importance of social interaction during mealtimes. A one-to-one discussion was held with all staff to reiterate the importance of child led transitions to mealtimes and social interaction.
- The registered provider has stated that some parents don't want their children to have a nap during the day and the service has been given strict instructions about this. The registered provider has had discussions with the parents with reference to the value of a daytime nap, they have agreed to a one-hour nap for their child, with ongoing discussions being held. The schedule has been changed to allow for this.
- The registered provider has stated that they will continue to have on-going discussion with parents in relation to their individual sleep plan.
- The registered provider has stated that they have had a conversation with staff to resolve this issue and that children will be brought to the toilet when needed and have nappies changed when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence submitted.
- None provided.
- Evidence of conversations submitted.
- None
- None

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 19.

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

- A three-week food menu plan was available for review in the kitchen and was observed to provide varied food. On the day of inspection food outlined for the day was observed to have been served for lunch. This was reflected in the children's daily record sheet in Playgroup room.
- Children were given breakfast upon arrival to the service of cereal, milk and toast, a hot meal of vegetable and lentil stew was served between around 11:15am, afternoon snack of fresh fruit was observed to be given at 14:09, a selection of sandwiches and fruit was scheduled to be given at 15:15. All food was provided by the service and prepared in the onsite kitchen.
- Children were provided with adequate amounts of food with additional provided if need.
- Additional hot food options were available to children who did not want to eat the hot meals provided to them.
- Water was accessible to children within the service. Ensuring adequate hydration

Non-Compliance Information

1. Although children were observed to eat from bowls and plates during lunch time, in the afternoon children in the Playgroup room were observed to eat fruit off a paper napkin laid on the table. Children should be given adequate utensils to enrich their eating experience.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has stated that the children use bowls, plates and utensils during snack time and will continue to do so to aid their eating experience.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence provided.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 22.

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 main entrance to the service was secure upon the inspector's unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The kitchen door remained closed and inaccessible to children throughout the day.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- First aid boxes were placed in the care room and were available to the children when needed.
- The ambient room temperatures in the service were kept between the recommended 18-22 °C.
- The outdoor area was fully secured and enclosed with fencing and high walls.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules were on display through the service outlining frequency of cleaning.
- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing potential cross contamination.
- Pedal bins were available throughout the service ensuring the safe disposal of rubbish.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications are not routinely given within the service, but staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required.
- Temperature reducing medication was safely stored and available to the children if needed.

Safe Sleep:

- The ambient temperature in the sleep room was kept between the recommended 18-22°C. A twice daily record was kept of this temperature.
- The registered provider ensured that 10-minute sleep checks were completed which outlined a child's sleep position, colour and breath.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Ceiling light covers were missing from the Playroom and ECCE 1 room. This poses a potential of shattering on children.

Infection Control:

2. Handwashing practices throughout the service were inconsistent and not in line with the service policy on handwashing. For example,
 - In the ECCE/ Montessori room one adult was observed to have not washed their hands prior to serving meals.
 - In the Playgroup room two different staff members did not undertake handwashing after performing nasal hygiene on a child. This is a risk for cross contamination of harmful bacteria.
3. Wet wipes were used to clean children's faces and hands after mealtimes. Warm water, liquid soap and agitation are needed for effective removal of bacteria.
4. Two cots in the sleep room were stained and without waterproof covers. This prevents effective cleaning and poses a risk of harmful bacteria to children.

Fire Safety:

5. The registered provider did not ensure that one child within the Playgroup room had a completed record of attendance. It is acknowledged that this child was settling into the service however fully completed records need to reflect the presence of all children within a service at all times. This poses a potential risk that the child may not be counted in the event of a emergency fire evacuation.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider has stated that they have purchased light fittings which are to be fitted this week. The registered provider will ensure all light fittings have protective covers.

Infection Control:

2. Staff have been advised on the need for more adequate hand washing with warm water, liquid soap and bacterial hand sanitizer available for all staff, staff have all been updated on the Infection Control Policy.
3. The registered provider has stated that wet wipes will not be used for cleaning. Staff have reviewed that Infection control policy.
4. The registered provider has bought waterproof covers and will change them as needed.

Fire Safety:

5. The registered provider has updated the attendance record and staff have been advised to complete the attendance book immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic and documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Documentary evidence submitted.
3. Documentary evidence submitted.
4. Documentary evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

5. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 16 April 2025.
 - (b) A record was available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating it was last serviced in September 2024, and the number, type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms throughout the service, these were last serviced on the 8 August 2024.
- (2)
- (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the inspector.
- (4) A notice of procedures was displayed throughout the service indicating the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.