

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY049
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Name of Service:	Burren View Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	76A Burren View, Ennis Road, Gort, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 D658
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Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Fallon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel and F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

Burren View Creche and Montessori is registered to operate a full day care service, which also caters for children attending on a part time and sessional basis. Children ranging in age from 1 - 6 years are accommodated. Daily opening hours are from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, and the service is open for 49 weeks of the year. This includes children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is facilitated over 38 weeks annually from 09:00 to 12:00.

Burren View Creche and Montessori is located in Gort in south county Galway. There are three rooms, namely, Montessori ECCE, Pre-ECCE and Toddlers. In addition, there are two children's sanitary areas, one adult toilet, a nappy changing room, kitchen and office. The outdoor areas are located at the side and rear of the service.

Staffing

There are a total of seven adults employed by the service including the registered provider. A cleaner is employed in the evenings after operational hours. In addition, a student was on placement 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 focused on an examination of compliance under;

Regulation 9 - Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-school Child

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play (1) (b)

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2) (a) and (b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety Measures (1) (a) (b) and (4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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 registered provider, deputy 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for

the duration of the inspection. The registered provider assisted with the administrative requirements of the inspection and acted as childcare relief in the care rooms. Documentary evidence in the form of a staff sign in/sign out book indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when early years children were present.

- (2) Recruitment files for the six adults and one student were reviewed. A recruitment file for the cleaner who does work in the service during operational hours was not required.
- (a) Eleven of the required 14 written validated references were available on file from a past employer.
- (b) Three of the required 14 written validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six adults working directly with the children and the student on placement. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures indicated that 5 of the adults had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting. It was acknowledged that where applicable these vetting's were translated by a reputable source.
- (4) Six adults working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 or above, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The student and the cleaner did not require a childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(7) (a)

The registered provider did not ensure that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and training. For example, the registered provider and staff advised that staff meetings were documented, however no evidence was provided on or following the inspection to support this. The supervision policy outlined that appraisals and monthly review meetings were carried out during probationary periods, however there was no evidence available to demonstrate this.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(7) (a) Staff meetings, appraisals and supervision are carried out in the service. Supervision notes, minutes of meetings and staff appraisals will be kept in the office for ease of access. Appraisals will be carried with new employees after 3 months.

Supporting documentation submitted

(7) (a) Supervision, appraisal and staff meeting documentation was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (7) (a).

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies, procedures and statements in Schedule 5 were reviewed by the inspector on the day of inspection and were found to contain the required information;

1. Healthy Eating Policy.
2. Supervision.

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) There were an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children while they were on the premises.

(2) The minimum adult/child ratios were met in both the morning and afternoon in all care rooms. There were 5 adults and 1 student working directly with 23 children in the morning and 22 children in the afternoon.

(8)(a) The sign in/sign out records of the staff indicated that the service operated with at least two adults while the early years children were present in the service.

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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i)

Fourteen children’s records were sampled and reviewed.

The 14 records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent and accurate.

The 14 children's records contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation/permissions for collecting the child.
- Details were recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was an emergency.

(4) and (5)

The registered provider advised, and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children's records were kept for two years from the date a child ceased attending the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined areas with equipment and toys providing play and learning opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas.
- The Montessori ECCE care room had a range of Montessori equipment which provided for each child's age and stage of development.

- Resources and toys were located on low-level shelving, within easy access of the children, offering choice and encouraging independence.
- The outdoor play areas offered alternative changes of environments for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor areas. Examples included ride-on toys, wheelbarrows, slides and a caterpillar tunnel.

(b)

- Four cots were available in the designated sleep room for children who wished to rest/sleep.
- Each cot was fitted with a waterproof mattress, fitted sheet and individual bed linen.
- Light in the room could be adjusted by a switch on the wall and by pulling down the blinds.
- Rest/quiet areas with soft furnishings including sofas and cushions were available in each care room, where the children could sit away from noisy activities. Books were positioned on low level bookcases to facilitate reading while resting.

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

Children were observed eating healthy and nutritious food served regularly throughout the day. In conversation, staff stated that the parents/guardians provide snacks for both morning and afternoon while the service provided a hot lunch and an additional evening snack for children availing of the full day care service.

- Breakfast of oat and wheat-based cereals were available from 08:00 and a morning snack was served from 10:00.
- Lunch, observed being served at 12:00 in the Toddler care room, consisted of shredded chicken, rice, carrots and peas. Afternoon snack in the Montessori ECCE room was noted to consist of rolls and ham.
- Alternative food, stored in the well-stocked freezer in the kitchen, was available to children who were hungry or did not like their snack. Examples included fish fingers, beef, mince and waffles.
- Children had access to individually labelled water bottles in each of the care rooms.
- Age and stage appropriate seating, cutlery and crockery were available in the service. An example included children in the Toddler room observed sitting in highchairs and at a table eating their food from bowls with spoons. Adults were available to assist where required.

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 door was secured on arrival. There was a secure buzzer intercom system at the entrance to the pre-school service to maintain safe entry and exit of staff and children.
- The kitchen and staff room were secured to prevent children from gaining access to unsafe areas.
- Low-level windows in the Montessori ECCE room were decorated with posters, preventing children from bumping into them.
- Windows were fitted with restrictors preventing children from exiting from them.
- Blind cords in the designated sleep room and in the Pre-ECCE care room were secured on hooks, which were inaccessible by the children.
- A handrail was fitted facilitating children walking to and from the outdoor area from the care rooms.
- Heavy equipment, in each care room, was anchored to prevent them from tipping or falling on top of the children.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to the children and stored securely.
- Leads, cables, and flexes in the indoor care rooms were secured and/or inaccessible to prevent any safety risks to early years children.
- Toys and play equipment were observed to be in good condition and well maintained.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with high concrete walls. Play areas were cordoned with wooden fencing. The exit gate was secured with a butterfly catch and a sliding bolt, both inaccessible by the children, preventing the children leaving the area unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, foot pedal operated bins.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, not exceeding 43°C, was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.

- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtimes.
- Staff members were observed wearing disposable aprons and gloves during nappy changing which were disposed of after each nappy change.
- A pedal operated, lined, sealed and lidded nappy changing bin was available for the hygienic storage of used nappies.
- The children's bedlinen and personal care items were labelled and stored individually.
- Children's coats in the Pre-ECCE care room were stored on hooks, off the floor area.

Administration of Medication:

- All medicines were stored in a basket inaccessible to the pre-school children. Each item was labelled with the child's name and the date of expiry. The registered provider advised that the medicines were checked regularly and that the staff were aware of the service administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Records were furnished to the inspector which evidenced that physical sleep checks including position, colour and breathing were being carried out every ten minutes.
- The 4 cots available in the designated sleep room, 3 of which were in use, were placed 50 cm apart.
- The sleep room temperature was recorded as 21°C, within the recommended temperature of 18°C-22°C, for children aged 12 months and over.

Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was clearly visible outside in the car park, a safe distance from the service.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers were secured with brackets on the wall outside the Toddler care room.

Outing:

- No outings were carried out on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- (1) At 10.15 a bottle of milk belonging to a child in the Toddler care room, aged between 1 and 2 years of age, was inappropriately stored on the drinks trolley. The same bottle of milk was observed at 15.00 on the drinks trolley. Staff advised that it did not get refrigerated. That posed a risk of the milk spoiling.

- (2) Cleaning schedules were available, and staff told inspectors that highchairs had been cleaned the previous week, of 10/02/2025. However, inspectors observed that underneath the trays of four highchairs there was a build-up of residue.
- (3) Four sleep mats, stored on a shelf in the Pre-ECCE care room, were observed to have foam exposed, preventing effective cleaning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

Infection Control:

- (1) There are no children with bottles of milk currently attending the service. Bottles of milk will be stored in the fridge immediately going forward.
- (2) Highchairs will be cleaned after each use and particular attention will be paid to hard to clean areas.
- (3) One of the sleep mats was removed and the others have been repaired. In future, staff will regularly inspect the sleep mats to ensure that they are in a good state of repair.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
- (2) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
- (3) Photographs of the sleep mats were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection under Regulation 23.

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) Three adults working in the pre-school service had evidence of First Aid Responder first aid course and four staff had paediatric first aid training.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available. It was located in an easily accessible, conspicuous, position in the kitchen.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

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.
- (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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 31/01/2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 27/03/2025. Records indicated that the last maintenance documentation for the fire detection system was dated 3/04/2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to evidence that adequate insurance was available for 33 early years children in a full day care service with an expiry date of 27/03/2025.