

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY131
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Name of Service:	Little Angels Childcare
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Address of Service:	Caheroyan, Athenry, Co Galway
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Eircode:	H65 X211
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Rooney-McAllen
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.13
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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

Little Angels Childcare is a private service which operates on a part-time and sessional basis for children aged 2 to 6 years. Operational hours are from 08:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated within these hours from 08:50 to 11:50.

The service is located on the outskirts of Athenry town in Co Galway and operates from a converted bungalow in a residential estate. It consists of 3 care rooms, 2 of which are located indoors- Butterfly and Colourful Petals and the Let it Grow care room in the outdoor area which adjoins the rear of the property. There are children's and adult's sanitary facilities, a separate nappy changing room and a staffroom located off the Colourful Petals care room. There is a large outdoor play area located at the rear of the service and a carpark to the front of the service.

Staffing

There are 6 adults employed in the service including the registered provider and an adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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.

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

(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) The registered provider was the person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise as required.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that both the person in charge and the named person were available while the pre-school children were on the premises.
- (c) A management structure was available and the adults working directly with the children were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) The recruitment files of all 6 adults were reviewed:

- (a) Eleven of the 12 validated references were from previous employers.
- (b) The remaining 1 of 12 validated references was from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 6 adults demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) Overseas police vetting was available for 1 adult for whom it was required who had lived outside of Ireland for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Staff files viewed on the day indicated that all 6 adults working directly with the children had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above, on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by 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

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children during the part-time hours of the service.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met. There were 6 adults observed working directly with 28 children when the inspector arrived at the service and throughout the morning until 11:50. In the afternoon there were 5 adults working with 14 children until 13:00.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were 2 adults on the premises while the early years children were 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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 12 children's pre-school records were reviewed; these were found to contain all relevant details from particulars (a) to (i) above for each of the children's records.

(3) The 12 records of the pre-school children were furnished to the inspector on the premises.

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

Basic needs:

- Staff stated that breakfast was available from 08:00 until 08:30 which consisted of wheat-based cereals, observed stored in the service. Children's snacks, served at 10:25 were observed to be healthy and nutritious. In conversation, the adults stated that the children's food had been prepared by the parents/guardians and was noted to consist of filled sandwiches and rolls, yogurt, cheese, bite sized mixed fruits and vegetables. The children who were availing of further care in the afternoon were offered a snack at 12 noon.
- Children's water bottles were visible in both the indoor care rooms and in the outdoor play from hydration stations. They were easily accessible from a table at the children's height.
- Each child had a plate to place their food on and the adults sat with the children during this time.
- The inspector observed that children were afforded ample time to finish snack without being rushed.

- Developmentally appropriate cutlery was observed in use and positioned within easy access of the children.
- Cosy rest areas consisting of soft furnishings including child sized sofas and canopies overhead were available in each care room, where children were observed reading and sitting throughout the day. Colourful rugs which included seasons of the year were underfoot adding to the comfort and aesthetics of these areas.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently. Staff were available nearby to provide reminders of hygienic hand washing, toilet flushing and closing of the door. Nappy changing in the nappy changing room, off the Butterfly care room. took place as and when required and wooden steps were available to assist the children to climb independently up to the changing unit.
- Appropriate clothing was observed on all the children playing in the outdoor play area throughout the day. The adults ensured that the children had their coats and hats on as the weather was changeable.

Supporting children's relationships:

- A key person approach was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for maintaining relationships with a designated group of children and their parents/guardians.
- Children's scrapbooks were labelled with each child's name, which had been put together by the keyperson and were available for the inspector to view. The adults stated that they document each child's individual interests and emergent curriculum throughout their time in the service and that the scrapbooks were sent home quarterly.
- Children in the Butterfly care room were provided with additional support and comfort which was promptly and kindly offered by the adult in the care room throughout the day. This practice was also observed by the adults of the Colourful petals and Let it Grow in the outdoor play area when assisting children who had difficulties with sharing and turn taking.
- Children were reminded gently by the adults in the outdoor play area to be mindful of the feelings of those around them and to be careful of where they put their hands.
- Adults in the care rooms who were supervising children playing in both the indoor and outdoor areas, were observed to work well as a team. They were heard, on several occasions, discussing children's individual needs and ensuring the children's needs were met.
- Various forms of communicating with parents/guardians was stated as being in use. Examples included a group messaging application and at drop off and collection as observed on the day.

- The adults in the service stated that meetings were held quarterly with the registered provider with topics for discussion such as the children, curriculum activities and training.

Physical and material environment:

- The two indoor and the one outdoor care rooms appeared clean and well organised.
- Clearly defined areas were visible which provided play opportunities for enhancing the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas.
- Toys and play equipment, which were easily accessible from storage boxes and trays, were displayed and labelled with pictures.
- Tables and chairs were positioned to facilitate group and solitary activities with a wide variety of resources stationed nearby.
- Displays including children's artwork and photographs were visually appealing and included relevant titles and captions including hedgehogs, our neighbourhood community and artwork related to curriculum themes.
- The fully enclosed outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for all the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was observed in use by the children on the day of inspection. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk with a wooden apex climbing structure visible, 2 wooden balance beams and slides. Tricycles and balance bikes provided opportunities to practice gross motor skills of pedalling, coordination, balancing and core strength. In addition, imaginary play opportunities were available from the mud kitchen in which children were observed in open ended play with natural materials. A covered wooden shelter was available ensuring the children could play outdoors in all weathers.

Programme of activities:

- Detailed long, medium- and short-term plans which included the children's individual emergent interests were furnished to the inspector, examples of which included hibernation, trains, dragons and dinosaurs. These plans detailed the daily, weekly and monthly activities which could be seen in action on the day of inspection and were evidenced with the artwork, books and materials available in the care rooms.
- All children's language development was heard to be supported through one to one, group discussions and songs which were observed during inspection. Staff were heard speaking to children in their native tongues, singing while handwashing and listening intently to the children's conversations. The adults were

heard using strategies to extend individual children’s thinking and learning. Examples included the adult in the Butterfly care room heard repeating the children’s words to offering familiarity and predictability, while the adults in the Colourful Petals and Let it Grow care rooms were observed in social conversation and were heard providing feedback, asking open questions and explaining.

- Children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities they wished to engage with. Turn taking and sharing was promoted and was evidenced by children in the outdoor play area working collaboratively together.

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:

- All internal and external doors were secured preventing unauthorised adults from entering the premises and children leaving the service unsupervised.
- The windows of the care rooms were fitted with restrictors ensuring the safety of the children.
- Toys in both the care rooms and outdoor play area appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Cables and flexes were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving out of reach of the children.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area at the rear of the service was secured with a concrete wall and green wire fencing. An access gate from the carpark to the outdoor play area was secured with a safety device ensuring that no unauthorised adult could enter and that no child could leave unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the fridge preventing it from spoiling.
- Sinks in use by the adults and children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, ranging between 27.1°C to 39.9°C, dispensing soap and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Nappy changing was observed in the Butterfly nappy changing room. The staff member was observed following the service’s nappy changing procedure and wore single use gloves and a plastic apron for each nappy change. Children’s personal belongings were stored in sealed boxes and a pedal operated bin which was lined, sealed and lidded was observed in use in the area.

- The inspector observed handwashing being carried out by both the adults and children: before the eating of food, before and after nappy changing, after toileting and when coming in from the outdoor play area.
- Tissues were available in the event they were required.
- Children's personal belongings including bags and coats were stored in cubby houses and mobile trollies away from the floor area.
- Windows in the care rooms were open providing a flow of fresh air.
- Cleaning checklists were available and were noted to be completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original container, was stored in the office on a high shelf inaccessible to the children. The expiry date was noted as 10/26.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed resting or sleeping on the day of inspection. There were 2 sleep mats and individual linen available for any child wishing to rest/sleep.
- Sleep templates were available to record 10-minute physical sleep checks which included the position, colour, breathing pattern and room temperature of each child.

Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor play area providing a designated safe place in the event of an emergency.
- Fire extinguishers were secured on the walls of the service with brackets.
- Fire exit doors were fitted with thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of the adults and children in the event of an emergency.

Outing:

- While the service was insured for outings the registered provider stated that no outings take place.

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) Documentary evidence in the form of the staff roster and First Aid Responder certificates (FAR) were available which indicated that 2 staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR); both of whom were available while the pre-school children were on the premises. In addition, the remaining 4 staff members had training in paediatric first aid.
- (2)
- (a) The well stocked first aid boxes were stored within easy reach of the adults in the Let it Grow care room and hallway.
 - (b) The first aid box was available at all times while the early years children were present in the service.

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.*
- (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) Records of monthly fire drills were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as 26 September 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The

recorded dates were noted as October 2025 and August 2025, respectively.

- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The fire procedure notices were visible on the walls of the service ensuring that the adults were aware of the steps to be followed in the event of an emergency to ensure the safety of the children and adults on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished to the inspector which included the following details:

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 43
- The type of service: Part-time

Expiry date: 27 March 2026.