

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015GY254 |
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| Name of Service: | Teddy Bears Lodge |
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| Address of Service: | 61 Woodlands, Lackagh, Turloughmore, Co. Galway |
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| Eircode: | H65 Y838 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Hazel Curran |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date of Inspection: | 18/06/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 20 | PM | 19 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park. Galway. |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Teddy Bears Lodge is a private early years care and education facility, operated by the current registered provider since 2023. It provides a range of services including full day care, part-time and sessional programmes. While registered to provide early years care and education from 0 – 6 years of age, children currently attending are aged from 12 months to 6 years old. Operating hours are from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday for 42 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00, school term time only.

The service is in the village of Lackagh, halfway between Galway city and Tuam. It is situated in a residential housing estate and operates from the ground floor where 2 of 3 care rooms are currently in operation namely- Toddlers and Pre-school. The third care room is in use as a sleep room for older children after lunch and a designated sleep room, with cots, is also in use for the younger children. In addition, there is a kitchen, where a hot lunch is prepared daily, adult and children’s sanitary facilities and a nappy changing room. The outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are 8 staff employed by the service, 4 of whom were working on the day of inspection including the registered provider.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

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.*

(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 register provider was the person in charge and a designated person in charge was available to deputise, as required.
- (b) On the day of inspection, the designated person in charge was rostered on the premises from 08:00 to 18:00. While rostered on from 09:00 the registered provider arrived at the service at 08:20.
- (2) The registered provider stated that 2 adults had commenced employment since the last inspection on 27 September 2024; this was evidenced by the staff roster. Therefore, these 2 adult's recruitment files were reviewed.
- (a) Four validated references were available from past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for both adults, however the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) The 2 adults who were working directly with the children, had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) International police vetting disclosure was unavailable for 1 adult who had lived outside of the state as an adult for more than 6 consecutive months. In addition, a curriculum vitae was not available for a second adult, therefore international police vetting requirements could not be established.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

- (2)
- (d) On closer examination of dates, on the adult's curriculum vitae and in conversation, it was established that the adult did not require international vetting as they were not out of the State for 6 consecutive months. A curriculum vitae is now on file for the second adult which indicates that no international vetting is required.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentation was received in office of the inspectorate:

- (2)
- (d) A copy of a revised curriculum vitae evidencing that the adult was not out of state for 6 consecutive months or more as an adult and a copy of a curriculum vitae for a second adult evidencing that no international vetting was required.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation (9) (2) (d).

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)
- (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 on the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children in the service.

(2) The adult/child ratios were met.

Toddler (12 months – 2 years 8 months)

There were 3 full day care and 1 part-time child in attendance with 1 adult throughout the day.

Pre-school (2 years 8 months – 6 years)

There were 11 full day care and 5 part-time children in attendance with 3 adults in the morning and 11 full day care and 4 part-time children in attendance with 2 adults in the afternoon.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)

(a) Contrary to the requirements, the registered provider did not ensure that there were 2 adults on the premises while the early years children were present in the service. When the inspector arrived on the premises at 08:05 there was 1 adult on the premises with 4 children. The staff roster for the weeks 9 – 13 June and 16 – 20 June indicated that there was only 1 staff member rostered on at the opening time of 08:00 and closing time of 18:00 where 2 were required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(8)

(a) Management will ensure that there are 2 adults on the premises while the early years children are attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentary evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate:

(8)

(a) Staff rosters written by the registered provider from the date of re-opening after the summer break from week beginning 25/08/2025 to week ending 05/09/2025 indicated that 2 adults were on the premises at the opening time and closing times of 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Thursday and 08:00 to 17:00 on a Friday.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 11 (8) (a).

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;

(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.

(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) Details of attendance by each early years child were available from a daily attendance record in the service.
- (j) A template was available in the event a child required medication to be administered. The registered provider stated no medication had been administered.
- (k) A sample of 12 accident/injury/incident reports were reviewed. The 12 reports were noted to contain all relevant information required including- date of incident, date of birth of the child, child's name, details of the accident/injury/incident, the care administered and the signatures of the parent/guardian, staff member and the manager.
- (3) The above records were available on the premises for review by the inspector on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) One staff member's roster was incomplete as their sign out times were not documented. The staff roster for week 9 - 13 June 2025 indicated that the staff member was signed in from 09:00 and no signing out times were recorded. In addition, on the week beginning 16 June 2025 no sign out times were available for the days 18 -20 June. Not stating the sign out times of staff could potentially compromise the adult/child ratio directly affecting the safety of the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (i) All staff have been advised that they are required to sign in and sign out on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

(i) A copy of the staff rosters from the opening date of 25/08/2025 to week ending 05/09/2025 were submitted to the office of the inspectorate which evidenced that staff on the roster are signing in and out on a daily basis.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (i).

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:

- A 3-week menu plan was displayed in the entrance area of the service for parents/guardians to view. Food observed being consumed on the day was healthy and nutritious and food and snacks were served at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Staff stated wheat and oat-based cereals were available between 08:00 and 08:50 and were provided by the service.
- Mid-morning snack in the Toddler room, provided by parents/guardians, was observed to consist of egg muffins, yogurt, berried fruits and cereal bars.
- A hot lunch, served at 11:50 was noted to consist of chilli con carne. Children who were hungry and requested more food were facilitated. Staff stated the afternoon snack was available from 14:45. Additional food was available in the fridge freezer including waffles, chicken nuggets and fish fingers should a child not like the lunch on offer or was hungry.
- Individually labelled bottles in the Pre-school care room and two handled cups with water were available in the Toddler care room. These were positioned within easy access of the children.
- Developmentally appropriate cutlery and crockery were provided in each care room, with the staff member in the Toddler care room assisting children with spoon feeding, where assistance was required.
- The inspector observed staff accompanying children from the Pre-school care room to the sanitary area throughout the day, helping with handwashing and reminding children to wash their hands.

- Children’s personal belongings were individually labelled and stored within reach in the Toddler nappy changing area.
- Rest areas furnished with vinyl seating sofas were available in each of the care rooms where children could sit away from noisy activities.

Supporting children relationships:

- Staff members were observed sitting at tables engaging the children in conversation helping to promote a relaxed atmosphere.
- Individual communication books were observed in use in the Toddler care room. These were completed by an adult in the care room for each child and included topics such as daily toileting, eating, sleeping, messaging and general information.
- Various methods of communicating with parents/guardians were stated as being in use including a group and personal messaging application and verbally at drop off and collection.
- Staff stated meetings with management took place with minutes of the meeting from 4 October 2024 furnished to the inspector. Topics included laundering of sleep sheets, new porch, cleaning checklist and children’s development.

Physical and material environment:

- Both care rooms were set out in clearly defined areas. A wide variety of resources and toys were available which offered opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas.
- Materials and resources were easily accessible from nearby shelving positioned within reach of the children, providing choice and independence.

Programme of Activities:

- Children’s language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. Examples included the staff member in the Toddler care room sitting with children reading words on flashcards and presenting the pictures to the children, while staff in the Pre-school care room were heard practicing graduation songs with the children in the care room.

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:

- Internal and external doors were secured in the service preventing children from accessing unsafe areas.
- Highchairs in the Toddler care room were fitted with safety harnesses preventing children from climbing out.
- Toys and play equipment in both the indoor and outdoor areas appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Blind cords in sleep rooms were secured with hooks out of reach of the children.
- Handrails were fitted to ramps in the outdoor area facilitating all children moving safely from the care rooms to the outdoor play area.
- Storage equipment was secured preventing the units from tipping or falling on top of a child.
- Safety tiling was fitted in the outdoor area minimising the risk of falls and injuries.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with high concrete walls and two high metal gates ensuring unauthorised adults could not enter the play area and children could not leave unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by adults and children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, between 37.5°C - 39°C, dispensing soap and paper towels. Pedal operated waste bins were in use for the disposal of paper waste.
- The inspector observed that nappy changing in the Toddler care room was carried out as required and regularly throughout the day at 10:30, 13:30 and 15:30 in line with services nappy changing policy. The inspector observed a completed nappy changing record book with each of the 3 children's names and times of nappy changes; these details were cross referenced with the communication book which was sent home to parents/guardians and were found to correspond with each nappy changed.
- Nappy changes were observed to be carried out in line with the services nappy changing policy. The adult from the Toddler care room was observed using single use aprons and gloves for each nappy change helping to reduce the risk of cross contamination. In addition, handwashing was observed before and after nappy changing and the unit and mat were sanitised after use.

- A pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed nappy bin was in use the Toddler nappy changing area for the hygienic disposal of used nappies.
- The nappy changing area was fitted with natural and mechanical ventilation facilitating the circulation of fresh air and the removal of stale air.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the fridge, preventing the food from spoiling.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication, stored out of reach of the children, was available in the event of an emergency.
- No medication was administered while the inspector was present in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspector was furnished with evidence of the 10-minute physical sleep checks which were carried out on each child who was asleep in the designated cot room and in the sleep room with the stackable beds. These detailed each child's breathing, position, colour, room temperature and the signature of the staff member who carried out the sleep check in line with the service's safe sleep policy.
- The 7 cots in the designated sleep room and the 4 stackable beds in use in a separate sleep room were placed 50 centimetres apart ensuring the safety of the children.
- Cots were fitted with cellular blankets and staff stated each child took home their sheets to be laundered on a Friday.
- CCTV was available of the sleep rooms in use.
- All children observed sleeping were over 12 months old. The temperatures within the sleep rooms were recorded within the recommended limits of 18°C-22°C.
- Of the 7 cots in the designated sleep room, 4 were fitted with mattress protectors and the other 3 were fitted with waterproof mattresses.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were unobstructed and fitted with thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of adults and children in the event of an emergency.
- Illuminous lighting was visible on the fire signs throughout the service, guiding adults and children to safety in the event of a fire.
- The fire assembly point was located on the green outside the front of the service, a safe distance from the building.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for both adults, however, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice "EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting" posing a potential safety risk to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting application was submitted for the employee and is now of file.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of a Garda vetting renewal for the employee for whom it was required was received in the office of the inspectorate on 25/09/2025.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified 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) Certificates were available to evidence that 2 adults had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The staff roster confirmed that an adult trained in FAR was available while the early years children were in the service.

(2) (a) (b) Well stocked first aid boxes and a portable first aid bag, stored on a high shelf in the kitchen, were within reach of the adults throughout the period that the 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 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) Written records of monthly fire drills were available in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated 16 June 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available recording the number, type and maintenance records of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms record were dated 21 March 2025.
- (2)
- (c) All records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review by the inspector.
- (4) Fire drill routines were visible on the wall of the hallway in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Non-Compliance Information

- The number of children noted on the record of attendance in the service exceeded the number of children recorded on the insurance certificate. The inspector observed that insurance documentation stated that the service was insured for 25 children, however the inspector noted that from 30/09/2024 there were 27 children recorded as attending the service dropping to 26 from the 06/01/2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

- There will be no more than 25 children in the service at one time in line with the insurance requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the children’s attendance records from the week beginning 1 – 5 September 2025 indicated that there were no more than 19 children registered and in attendance during that week. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 28.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider’s complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a), (b) and (c) The service’s Complaints Policy was available and was furnished to the inspector. It contained the procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint, the way the complaint would be dealt with and procedures for keeping the complainant informed.
- (2)
- (a) (b) There were no records of complaints to the service. A timeline of response was documented in the event of a complaint being received.
- (3)

- (a) (b) Details of any complaints, how they would be actioned along with a timeline of response was detailed in the policy.
- (4) The registered provider was aware that the records are required to be kept for a period of 2 years from the date on which any complaint was received and this information was also detailed in the policy.