

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE144
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Name of Service:	Auntie Annes Country Creche
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Address of Service:	Gilltown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	R56 TY27
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Birchall, Regina Birchall
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	75	PM	67
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Auntie Annes Country Crèche is a private service providing full day and sessional care and education to pre-school children aged 1-6 years. The service opens from 8:00am – 17:30pm, Monday to Friday.

Four pre-school rooms, a sensory room, sleep room and a kitchen are provided and are located across two single storey buildings. A large indoor play space with refurbished sanitary facilities and various dedicated outdoor play facilities are located to the rear and sides of the premises. Parking was available to the front of the building.

Staffing

There were seventeen adults employed in the service and included both registered providers. There were fourteen adults present on the day of inspection, eleven of whom were working directly with the children and included one of the registered providers. One further staff member, the cook and an external contractor providing an acting class were also present.

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, child safety, premises and facilities. 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-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that three new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. An external contractor was also present in the service. These four records were reviewed.

(2)(a), (b)

Two written and verified references from a past employer or a reputable source were available as required in respect of the four adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all employed staff members and one external contractor.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no adult, whose record was reviewed, had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4)

Three adults recently employed and working directly with pre-school children, held a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher 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,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- (1)
There were 75 children attending the service being supervised directly by 11 adults.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection; this was confirmed by the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*
- (i) *details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (3) *A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises,*

Compliance Information

- (i)
The staff roster contained the relevant information outlining each staff members name, rostered hours, break times with named relief cover, assigned pre-school room and the person available trained in First Aid Response.
- (3)
The record was available for inspection.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

The rest areas in the pre-school rooms consisted of sofas, cushions and soft flooring. The walls in the rest areas in Ash and Hazel rooms were covered with soft artificial grass material which presented a soft and sensory area for the children when using the areas. Comfortable seating was available in Ash room for staff to sit, hold and nurse the younger children.

Twenty-three low level beds were available for any child aged 2 years and above wishing to avail of a period of sleep when attending the full day care service and Hazel room transitioned into a sleep room in the afternoon for this purpose.

One cot room was equipped with fourteen standard cots to provide for the sleep needs of children less than 2 years old attending the service. Appropriate bed linen was in place for the cots and low-level beds.

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 gates to the pre-school were electro-magnetically secure and were controlled by staff to prevent any pre-school child from exiting the service unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

Daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed electronically to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff. When conversing with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately cut the food into smaller pieces. Staff members in each room also advised they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

No hazards were observed indoors or in the outdoor area as the service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents which were out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established as observed. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues and soiled nappies.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Two nappy changes were observed and carried out hygienically in accordance with the nappy change policy of the service. Cleaning schedules were electronically maintained; the premises was observed maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service and all documentation was maintained in electronic format.

Safe Sleep:

The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance to reduce the risk of sudden infant death including completing 10-minute sleep check observations on all sleeping children. The documenting of the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children was completed electronically. The sleep room temperature was maintained between 16-20°C and was recorded at 16.2°C at 11:29am.

Fire Safety:

Staff outlined to both inspectors, the fire/emergency evacuation routes taken from their individual rooms when conducting fire drills. Fire exits were not obstructed and were clearly signed.

Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service as confirmed by staff.