

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY068
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Name of Service:	Little Chicks Preschool
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Address of Service:	Barragougeen, Moyvane, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V31 ET25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Fitzgerald
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	None
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
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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Description of service

Little Chicks is registered as a privately operated early years service, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a sessional basis. The children attending on inspection were aged between 3 years and 5 years. The service offers one session between the hours of 9.30am and 12.30 pm Monday to Friday. The service is located in a purpose-built building at the registered provider's home setting in the rural area of Moyvane, Co. Kerry. The service consists of 2 playrooms with sanitary accommodation in both playrooms and spacious outdoor play areas consisting of an enclosed sand tunnel and planting boxes, an outdoor classroom and a spacious yard with a concrete surface underfoot.

Staffing

There are five adults attached to the service employed to work directly with the children each day. This includes 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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*

(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.*

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(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 is the designated person in charge and there is a named deputy to deputise in her absence as required.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to each of the 5 adults attached to the service were inspected.
- (a) Of the 10 references required, eight references from previous employers with records of validation were on file.
- (b) Of the 10 references required, two references with records of validation were on file from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 5 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was on file for 1 adult who had resided outside of Ireland for a period of longer than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) The 3 staff working directly with the children had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with copies of the relevant qualifications on file.

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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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.

(3) There were 4 adults caring for 22 children between 2 playrooms, aged between 3 years to 5 years attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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

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Compliance Information

Basic Needs: -

- The playrooms allowed for the children to move about freely and choose whichever toys or play activities they wanted.
- The children had access to a variety of play materials and toys that were stored on low level open shelving.
- The staff were observed to encourage the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities and equipment in the indoor and in the outdoor environment, based on the child's individual needs, choices, interest and stage of development.
- On the inspector's arrival to carry out the inspection all the children were playing in the secured outdoor play area.
- The outdoor area had key divided sections supporting individual, small and large group activities
- There was for example a section for using ride on toys (tractor, bikes), for push along toys, an area with tuff trays, one with a mix of moss peat, oats and a selection of small vehicles and small animals, a second tray with blocks, and a third tray with sand and various utensils.
- There were tyres placed on the concrete surface for the purpose of physical and imaginary play for example, observed the children used them for building obstacle courses and create seating.
- A painting easel was provided resourced with paper, paints, brushes and protective aprons for children to wear.
- The outdoor classroom was available to the children where the children had a toy kitchen, dolls, dolls clothes and push chairs, a selection of books with seating and a rug on the floor and arts and crafts items.
- The inspector observed the children moved between each of the areas as they so wished during the time they spent there.
- The inspector observed the children were accompanied by a staff indoors to use the toilet as soon as they told the staff members.
- The parents of the children attending provide the food for the snack time.
- The children ate their food indoors at the low-level tables in both playrooms.
- The staff members sat with the children during the snack time which promoted social interaction among the children and the staff.
- The snack time was observed to be unhurried, children had plenty of time to eat.

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- The food observed included sandwiches, yogurts, a selection of fruit, tuna with brown bread and water to drink.
- The children who had finished before others asked to go outdoors and were facilitated to do so.
- The children were appropriately dressed for playing in the outdoors with coats and some had hats. In addition, the registered provider had a supply of warm gloves for the children if they wanted to wear them.
- The staff were kind, attentive and caring towards the children attending.

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 outdoor area was fully enclosed with secure gates and fencing.
- The cleaning agents observed were stored out of the reach of the children on high level shelving.
- Medication was stored separate to the first aid box within a sealed, clearly labelled box on a high-level shelving unit out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities were provided in the service. There was warm water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towels to promote effective handwashing by the children and the staff. The staff were nearby to assist the children as needed.
- The tables were sanitised down before and after the snack time.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after playing in the outdoor play area, after using the toilet and before the snack time.
- The children's perishable food items were re-frigerated to reduce the risk of food spoilage.
- The premise, it's fixtures and fittings were observed to be in a clean condition.
- Windows were open to provide natural ventilation.

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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) Of the five staff members working in the service, four staff had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

- (2)
- (a) The sufficiently equipped first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the rear playroom, out of reach of children.
 - (b) At all times when the service is in operation, the first aid box was accessible to the adults in the event that children required them.

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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.*
- (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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 25.3.'26
 - (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 12.08.'25 and for the firefighting equipment was 12.08.'25.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.