

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD032
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Name of Service:	Little Angels
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Address of Service:	Battery Road, Longford, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 E268
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Name of Registered Provider:	Antonella Taaffe
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	53	PM	42
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate TUSLA 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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Description of service

Little Angels is a private childcare service located on the outskirts of Longford town and offers full day, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 1-6 years. Six pre-school rooms, a sleep room, office and kitchen are provided. The service opens from 8pm-6pm daily. A large secure outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

The service is registered for school age care.

Staffing

Fourteen adults are employed in the service; this includes the registered provider who was present during the inspection. There were thirteen staff present on the day of inspection, of these, nine adults were working directly with the children. The registered provider and two relief staff members, who arrived at the service at 11am and 12pm respectively, were available to assist and provide cover in the rooms as necessary. The office administrator was 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, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under,
Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4) - Management and Recruitment
Regulation 11- Staffing Levels

Regulation 24 – Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25 - First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 27 - Supervision

Regulation 28 - Insurance

However, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under,

Regulation 29(d) - Premises

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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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 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

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

The records of fourteen staff members employed were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of fourteen adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for fourteen employed staff members.

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) Not applicable, as no adult had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Eleven adults employed and working directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)
One adult employed and working directly with the children did not have documentary evidence of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Copy of staff qualification on file. To prevent this reoccurring, we will amend our recruitment policy and ensure that any successful applicant has a copy of their certificate before commencement at our service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Document x 1

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9(4) has been met.

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 53 children attending the service being supervised directly by 9 staff members during the inspection, 2 relief staff members and the registered provider were available to provide support and assistance to the rooms if required throughout the day.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(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 rostered hours for each staff member.

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 to the service was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

During conversations with staff members, they advised the inspector they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately removed or cut the food into smaller pieces. The staff members also advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment in the indoor environment and the safe storage of cleaning agents which were placed out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, paper towel and waste. Plastic aprons, disposable gloves and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy change practices. Specific sealed foot pedal bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of soiled nappies.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. During conversations with the staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service. Medicine was safely stored and out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

The staff members completed 10-minute sleep check observations on all sleeping children documenting the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits on the premises were unobstructed and staff members advised the inspector they were familiar with the fire evacuation route from their care rooms.

Outing:

Outings take place from the service, and an outings policy was in place to guide practice.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The hot water at the hand basin in the Wobbler room, at the four hand basins in the main sanitary area and at the hand basin in the single toilet on the corridor was recorded at 69°C, 62°C and 50.5°C respectively at 10:30am and was a risk of a scald injury to a child or staff member. When it was brought to their attention, immediate corrective action was taken by the registered provider who advised all staff members not to use the hot water taps and the water was immediately switched off at the immersion tank. The water temperature was recorded between 28-29°C at 12:30pm.

Infection Control:

2. Five nappy changing procedures were observed, during two of the nappy changes the staff members did not remove their gloves and aprons before putting the clean nappy in place; this posed a risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

3. One child, aged 17months who had not adjusted to sleeping in a cot, was placed to sleep on a low-level bed in the Wobbler room each day, this bed did not meet the recommended sleep requirement for a child less than 2 years old not sleeping in a cot. A specific floor bed with mattress was required.

Fire Safety:

4. There was/were no visible outdoor fire assembly point(s) on the premises.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The hot water tank thermometer was reset. A separate water heater is in place for the kitchen sink to ensure hot enough water for the washing dishes etc. The thermostat will be checked on a regular basis to ensure it is maintaining the correct temperature.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action:

Nappy changing procedure was updated to state when the gloves and aprons are to be removed which was signed off by all staff that change nappies. A practical demonstration was carried out with staff that change nappies.

Preventive Action:

Regular checks on nappy changing will be carried out by management every couple of months.

Safe Sleep:

Corrective Action:

A floor bed has been ordered.

Preventive Action:

Standard cots will be used for sleeping children under 2 years.

Fire Safety:

Corrective Action:

The fire assembly sign was put back up at the back of the garden

Preventive Action:

We will ensure this fire assembly sign will remain in place at all times in line with fire safety regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph x 1

Infection Control:

Document x 1

Safe Sleep:

Document x 1

Fire Safety:

Photograph x 1

Summary Comment

Following review of the evidence and written response submitted, the inspectorate is satisfied the requirement for Regulation 23 has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (3)(a)(b)
- The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' details were recorded on arrival to the service.

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)
Persons were trained First Aid Response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a)
The first aid equipment was safely stored, in conspicuous positions throughout the service.
- (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending 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.*
- (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) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service; the last recorded fire drill was 13 August 2025.
- (b) A maintenance record was kept of the firefighting and smoke alarm system in the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke/fire detection system were serviced 19 March 2025.
- (4)
A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the adults caring for them including, indoors in their care rooms, during transitions going to and coming from the outdoor play area, while in the outdoor play area, when using the sanitary facilities and during sleep times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 66 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

- The wooden play equipment and fencing in the outdoor play area was not maintained in a proper state of repair as observed by the following:
 - The wooden wigwam play unit was broken in several area and exposed screws were observed on the frame.
 - The wooden play equipment in the outdoor area required to be deep cleaned and repainted.
 - The wooden supporting beams in the covered areas, a standalone protruding post in the play area, a protruding vertical rusted metal beam attached to the wall of the outdoor building in the outdoor play area, and various posts on walls were not covered in an impact absorbent material to prevent injury to a child if they failed to see them and ran into them.

- The wooden perimeter fence and gate had broken / missing slats which required replacement / repair and repainting.
 - There was a gap in the wooden fencing at the bottom of the outdoor area on the right-hand side of the covered area and a screw was exposed at the base of the wooden slat.
2. A gutter was dripping water causing a collection of the water in a corner which had nowhere to drain away quickly and was accessible to children playing in this area.
 3. Another drain, at the bottom of the down pipe attached on the righthand side of the outdoor play shed wall was covered, as a result, the contents of the down pipe could not clear/drain away from the play area which was accessible to the children.
 4. Weeds were observed to be growing between the impact absorbent tiles and along the edges of the artificial grass carpet surface.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action:

1. The wigwam and wooden bus were repaired washed and painted. The wooden beams have been covered to ensure children cannot get hurt if they run into them, numerous uprights were removed or covered. Repairs to the fencing has not been carried out as of yet we are waiting for this to be complete.
- 2 and 3. The drains were cleared and the downpipe was removed.
4. The timeframe for the completion of remaining works is 2/4 weeks.

Preventive Action:

1 to 4. Regular checks will be carried out on all outdoor equipment to ensure that it is kept on top of.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs x 7

Summary Comment

Following review of the evidence and written response submitted, the inspectorate is satisfied the requirement for Regulation 29 has been met.