

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LK059

Name of Service: Daydreams Creche

Address of Service: Lissnalta, Dooradoyle, Co. Limerick.

Eircode: V94 H5P8

Name of Registered Provider: Lynn Shanahan

Service type: Full Day, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 12/02/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM	57
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan, J Ryan
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

Day Dreams Creche operates from a single story, purpose built premises in an urban area on the outskirts of Limerick city. It is a privately owned, full day care facility. It caters for children from 1 to 6 years of age. It is opened from 7.15am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

The premises has 5 large preschool rooms namely a Wobbler room, a Toddler room, a Preschool room and 2 Montessori rooms. There is a dedicated sleep room next to the Wobbler room. There is a large outdoor play area to the rear of the facility.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the facility. There are 17 additional staff members employed to work at the service. Supplementary staff are available to prepare, cook and serve meals at the service.

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.

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, 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.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) On the day of the inspection the registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) The registered provider or their deputy were rostered to be on duty each day at the service.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all staff working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members. 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 available 7 staff members working at the service, who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All staff working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

(7) A staff policy booklet was given to all staff when they took up employment at the service. All policies of the service were outlined in the booklet. Details of the relevant Act and Regulations were included.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there were 67 pre-school children and 13 adults working directly with the children. The adult/child ratios in all areas of the service were correct.

In Wobbler room there were 9 preschool children with 2 staff members present.

In Toddler room there were 17 preschool children with 3 staff members present.

In Preschool room there were 15 preschool children with 2 staff members present.

In Montessori room 1 there were 18 preschool children with 3 staff members present.

In Montessori room (Sessional) 2 there were 8 preschool children with 1 staff member present.

Additional staff were available to prepare, cook and serve food on the premises and to relieve staff when taking meal breaks.

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:

The service had a healthy eating policy with a weekly documented menu plan. Meals included: Breakfast (7:15 am - 8:45 am), Dinner (11:15 am - 12:30 pm), Afternoon snack (3:15 pm) and Evening snack (4:30 pm). Designated staff were available for the preparation, cooking and serving of all foods. On the inspection day, meat balls with either mash or spaghetti were served, with an alternative option available. For snack times lots of healthy snacks were on the menu, such as fruit varieties, crackers, rice pudding, soups, garlic breads, bread sticks, cucumbers and tomatoes. Childrens drinks were removed from their bags when they arrived each day and were stored in an area

accessible to them throughout the day. Age-appropriate cutlery and seating arrangements were provided. Younger children were fed in highchairs and older children sat at low level tables. Staff assisted and engaged with children during meals.

Sanitary and nappy changing facilities were near each room, with hot water, liquid soap, and hand towels provided to ensure safe and hygienic handwashing. Childrens toiletries were all well labelled and stored in an easily accessible place. Low-level toilets and sinks allowed independence, with staff assistance available when needed.

Rest facilities included a separate sleep room for children under 2 years of age. Each child had access to their own cot. Older children used low-level beds, with staff supervision and documented sleep checks recorded every 10 minutes. Soft couches, cushions, blankets, and floor mattresses were available for comfort in all other rooms of the service.

An outdoor play area was provided, with allocated playtime for each group. A sheltered section allowed outdoor activities in poor weather.

Physical and Material Environment

Rooms throughout the service were designed for different age groups and abilities. The Wobbler room was designed to facilitate lots of floor play and had soft flooring, push-along toys, a climbing playhouse, and sensory toys. The Toddler room had lots of soft seating for children to relax and rest when tired. Low level tables and chairs were used for many tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes.

The Preschool rooms and the Montessori rooms were spacious, with low-level shelves displaying toys. Defined areas included library corners, construction zones, imaginative play areas, and sensory play was facilitated outdoors with sand and water trays accessible. Childrens personnel belongings were stored in labelled shelves where they could access them during the day if needed.

The outdoor space had a sheltered area with climbing frames, playhouses, bikes and trikes, allowing play in all weather conditions.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. The Toddler room was not equipped with appropriate cutlery and delf for snacking. Children had their foods of crackers and cheese served directly onto their table. All foods must be served onto plates for all meal and snack times.
2. The layout of the new toilet facilities in the Toddler room did not afford the children the required privacy when using the facility. No floor to ceiling partitions were in place separating the toilets from the occupied room.

Physical and Material Environment:

3. The uncovered area of the outside play area was closed for the winter months. Only half the outdoor play area was accessible to the children in the service. This impacted on the frequency of outdoor play for all children, and it reduced the length of time children got outdoors in the winter months. This lack of movement from children's indoor rooms could lead to boredom, frustration, and limited development of gross motor skills like coordination and balance. Making use of all vacant space outdoors offer the change of environment children require to maximise their developmental potential.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A review of mealtime routines took place. All food and snacks are served on plates at all mealtimes in each room of the service.
2. The toilet facilities in the Toddler room have been closed. Works to enclose this area of the service is planned.
3. Works have commenced in the open outdoor area making it accessible to all children on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs and video recordings of the completed works in the outdoor play areas were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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) The registered provider insured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times immediately available to the children in the service if they required first aid treatment. An upcoming refresher course was scheduled for all staff to attend.

(2)(a) The registered provider insured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) The first aid box in the managers office was well stocked and its contents were available to all attending the service throughout the day.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A record in writing of all fire drills at the service were maintained. Drills were carried out once a month. The most recent fire drill took place on the 13th of January 2025.

(b) A written record was available stating that all fire extinguishers were serviced annually. The most recent service took place in January 2025. All smoke alarms were checked on the 2nd of December 2024.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the preschool service was adequately insured. An up-to-date insurance certificate was available for inspection. The certificate stating that the service was covered to cater for a maximum of 90 preschool children. The insurance cover began on the 28th of March 2024 and the expiry date on the policy was the 27th of March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises indoors and outdoors appeared safe and secured with a high wall surrounding all outdoor play areas. Gates to the outside were secured and locked with keys to each lock readily accessible to the staff.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stuffiness or condensation on the premises. There were openable windows in all preschool rooms, and these were opened throughout the day to ensure the circulation of fresh air in all areas. In areas where no windows were present mechanical ventilation was in use.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, nappy changing areas and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults in attendance.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The following areas in the outside play space were not adequately maintained. These issues were highlighted in the last 2 reports dated 03/07/2023 and 18/04/2024.

- The grassed area which involves half of the entire space was not used during the winter months. The grass was not cut, and the area was not cleaned.
- Many pots and containers were full of stagnant rainwater.
- Weeds were noted between the joining's of the all-weather rubber matting.
- Broken toys were not removed and waste blown into the area after a recent storm was not disposed of.
- Debris and rubbish located along the side of the prefab building was not disposed of.

(e) New toilet facilities were added to the Toddler room. These were located in a corner of the room, surrounded by just low-level partitions and doors enclosing the toilet. All toilets must have floor to ceiling partitions

separating them from occupied rooms. Additional natural or mechanical ventilation was not provided in this additional sanitary area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) Works have begun on preparing the uncovered outdoor areas for use during all times of the year and in all weather conditions. The creation of a separate area for the younger children who are not yet walking has begun. All broken toys and waste in all outdoor areas have been removed.

(e) Works are planned to ensure all sanitary facilities are enclosed and are separated from all occupied rooms of the service. This work is planned for completion in April 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the structural changes to the service were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.