

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK059
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Name of Service:	Day Dreams Creche
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Address of Service:	Lissanalta, Dooradoyle, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 H5P8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynn Shanahan
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	29/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM	61
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne and M Riordan
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

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.

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.

A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the facility. There are 13 additional staff members employed to work at the service.

An additional 2 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.

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment

(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (3)(4)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 11 (1) - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 24 (1)(a), (b), (d)- Checking in and out and record of attendance

Regulation 29 - Premises

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN	29/04/2026	Garda vetting for 1 staff member was not available. Police vetting for 1 staff member was not available. These 2 staff members were present in the creche and working with the preschool children.
Status	Response from the registered provider was received on the 30 th of April as requested. Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventative actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 was present on the day of the inspection. There was a person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that a person in charge was always available at the service.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The files of 6 new staff members who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection dated the 12th of February 2025 were reviewed. The Garda vetting for all the staff members including the registered provider were reviewed.

(a) There were 12 written and validated references on file, submitted by all new staff members from their previous employers.

(b) There were no references required from sources other than past employers for the new staff members.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for 13 of the 14 staff members employed to work in the service. The Garda vetting for 13 of the 14 staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection dated the 12th of February 2025 and who had resided outside of jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The staff members working with the preschool children had the appropriate childcare qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(c) Please refer to the section Statuary Notice for additional information.

(d) Please refer to the section Statuary Notice for additional information.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried for 2 staff members prior to being employed, assigned and allowed access / contact with preschool children attending the pre-school service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

(2)

(c) The registered provider submitted the Garda vetting into the inspectorate on 06/05/2026.

(d) The police vetting for the 1 staff member was submitted to the inspectorate on the 17/06/26.

(3)

The service has put in place measures to ensure these mistakes will not reoccur and that all vetting procedures will be completed before staff members are employed to work in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted of the Garda vetting and the Police vetting for the 2 staff members.

Summary Comment

(2) The actions taken and the evidence submitted were assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 9 points (2) (c) and (d).

(3) The action taken was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 9 point (3)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

On the day of the inspection there 11 childcare staff working and supervising 70 preschool children in the morning and there were 11 childcare staff working and supervising 61 preschool children in the afternoon.

(2) In the Wobbler room there were 8 preschool children with 2 staff members present.

In the Toddler room there were 18 preschool children with 3 staff members present.

In the Preschool room there were 19 preschool children with 2 staff members present.

In the Montessori room 1 there were 20 preschool children with 3 staff members present.

In the Montessori room (Sessional) 2 there were 5 preschool children with 1 staff member present.

The registered provider and the deputy were available throughout the day if required.

Additional staff were available to prepare, cook and serve food on the premises and to care for the school aged children in the afternoon.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

A healthy eating policy was implemented at the service, ensuring the provision of nutritious foods and snacks to children daily. Breakfast was available for early arrivals. A nutritious hot meal of stew was served on the day of the inspection. Drinks of water were offered with all meals. Staff sat with children while eating and mealtimes were observed to be sociable occasions. The appropriate cutlery and delf for snacking/meals for the age and stage of each child's development was observed being used throughout the service.

Nappy changing facilities were located close to the wobbler and toddler rooms. Waist-high changing units were accessible and maintained in good condition, with easy to clean change mats supplied. Nappy changing procedures were displayed, and staff were observed adhering to the guidelines as outlined in the policy. Open shelving units held children's toiletries, all clearly labelled and within easy reach of staff. Handwashing facilities were situated next to the changing units, and foot pedal-operated lidded bins were available for safe nappy disposal. The required work on the toileting facilities for the Toddler playroom were completed to ensure the privacy and dignity of each child was respected.

The service featured a designated sleep room next to the wobbler room. Each child under 2 years of age had access to a cot when needed. The room was equipped with blackout blinds to minimise lighting during sleep times. Room temperatures were monitored to ensure safe and ambient room temperatures at all times. For children over two years old, requiring a nap, low-level beds were provided in their care rooms after dinner each day. Staff closely monitored all children during sleep and documented the details of all sleep checks. play in well-furnished outdoor spaces at the rear of the facility. Sheltered space outdoors ensured outdoor play opportunities were available in all weather conditions. Children benefited from frequent environment transitions, including extended outdoor play in well-furnished outdoor spaces at the rear of the facility. Sheltered space outdoors ensured outdoor play opportunities were available in all weather conditions. Plans were in place at the service to develop a dedicated sensory room to facilitate a quiet space for those needing a break from active and busy settings.

Relationship and Interactions around children:

The service successfully supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff members through an effective key person system. Each child was assigned a dedicated staff member who maintained an individualised understanding of their unique preferences, dislikes, and personal interests. During interactions, staff consistently positioned themselves at the children's physical level, maintained direct eye contact, and demonstrated active listening. They validated the voice of the child by carefully interpreting both verbal

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

communications and non-verbal cues, including gestures and body language, to understand their evolving needs, feelings, and experiences.

Staff responded to requests for assistance in a prompt, highly sensitive manner, utilising positive language and soft, reassuring vocal tones. When children became upset or fatigued, team members immediately provided appropriate comfort and nurturing care. The service hosted interactive arts and crafts mornings to actively involve parents and guardians in the setting. These family engagement sessions offered valuable opportunities for parents to connect with staff members and establish strong partnerships. Additionally, the events allowed families to engage directly in creative, hands-on learning experiences alongside their children.

Physical and Material Environment

The service's indoor environments were intentionally designed to provide children with a wealth of choices and engaging opportunities. During the inspection, children appeared settled, content, and deeply immersed in their self-selected activities. The rooms accommodating the wobblers and toddlers were large, bright, and spacious areas, with lots of soft mats for floor play. Low level couches provided rest areas, while adult seating allowed staff to sit comfortably with children. Climbing frames with steps, low level slides and crawling spaces, accommodated gross motor development opportunities. Low level open shelving units held a wide variety of age-appropriate toys. Push and pull toys aided early walking and climbing skills, while stationary toys helped with assistance standing. Well-developed home corners featured kitchen units with utensils, dolls, and prams for imaginative play. In all rooms construction materials, open-ended play items, and puzzles were easily accessible. Children's artwork and educational posters were exhibited on walls of each room located at a height where children could engage with them. Outdoor play areas were directly accessible at rear of the premises. All outdoor play areas were enclosed with high walls and fencing. Synthetic grass covered a large area outdoors, thereby reducing the risk of injury while children played outside. Lots of ride-on cars and toys, low level slides and swings helped promote gross motor development. Sensorial play was facilitated outdoors with sand and water trays accessible. A large, sheltered area ensured that children spent prolonged periods outdoors each day, regardless of weather conditions.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) All adults dropping children to the service checked the child in with the person in charge of the service or the person in charge in each playroom.
- At home time children were checked out of the service in a similar manner. The staff documented the children's arrival time and their departure time each day.
- (3)(a) The service ensured that only children attending, the person who drops and collects and the employees gain access to the premises.
- (b) All visitors to the service were signed in and signed out by the person in charge.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure. No identification of any building defects were observed or highlighted by the registered provider or any staff member.
- (b) The entrance to the service was secured and all visitor access was managed appropriately. The outdoor areas were safe and secured with high walls and fences preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from the areas.
- (c) Heating, ventilation and lighting were adequate in each area of the facility.
- (d) The premises throughout appeared clean with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the premises. The areas identified as non-compliances in the previous inspection dated the 12/02/2025 were addressed.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary accommodation were noted in the service. The additional work on the new toilet facilities added to the Toddler room was completed. Mechanical ventilation was also provided in this additional sanitary area. These areas identified in the previous inspection of the 12/02/2025 were now addressed.