

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK069
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Name of Service:	Family Tree Creche
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Address of Service:	Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership, Roxboro Road, Limerick, Co Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 VK19
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niall O Callaghan
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	43
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 2nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry St. Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

The Family Tree Creche is a community childcare service located on the outskirts of Limerick City. Open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.00pm, it currently has 51 registered children. The purpose-built, single-story building includes rooms for babies, wobblers/toddlers, junior pre-schoolers, and senior pre-schoolers, as well as a manager's office, kitchen, staff room, sanitary facilities, nappy changing areas, and sleep rooms. Outdoor play areas are situated at the side and back of the premises. The service caters for children in the age range of 0 to 6 years.

Staffing

The registered provider has appointed a manager to oversee the operation of the service. An assistant manager is also available. There are an additional 17 staff in total employed to work with pre-school children at the facility. All staff hold the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 and welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 19 and 23. 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 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*
- (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

(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;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider does not work at the facility. He has appointed a designated manager to oversee the day-to-day running of the service. An assistant manager was also available.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the service manager was present, and the staff roster indicated that the manager or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.

(2)(a) The staff files of 2 new staff members who had taken up employment in the service since it was last inspected were reviewed. There were two written and validated references available for both new staff members.

(b) References that were reviewed were both from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. 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 not required for any of the new staff member as none of them had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.

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

(7) (a) Both new staff members who had recently taken up employment in the service had detailed induction training. All services policies were explained in detail and staff had an opportunity to become familiar with the

procedures outlined in each policy. Both staff worked under supervision for their first week. Ongoing regular reviews were scheduled during the probation period.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

Policy on Accidents and Incidents

The policy on accidents and incidents outlined the measures to be taken in the service to prevent accidents and incidents. It clearly set out the procedures to be followed when an accident or an incident involving a preschool child occurred while the child was attending the service. It outlined the steps to be taken to contact parents or guardians of the child or the emergency services if required. It described how information was recorded, documented and stored. It outlined risk assessment procedures that were taken following any incident that occurred in the service.

Policy on Behaviour Management

The policy on managing behaviour sets out how children's positive social, emotional, and behavioral well-being was supported and promoted in the service. The policy reflected up-to-date best practice and was appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children. It outlined the support offered to staff on how to support children's self-regulation and pro social behaviour.

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) The manager at the service ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at the pre-school service.

(2) On the day of the inspection, there were 43 pre-school children and 10 adults on the premises working directly with the children. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

There were 3 pre-school children and 1 staff in the Baby Room.

There were 4 pre-school children and 2 staff in the Wobbler Room.

There were 11 pre-school children and 2 staff in the Junior Preschool Room.

There were 12 pre-school children and 3 staff in the Preschool Room 1.

There were 13 pre-school children and 2 staff in the Preschool Room 2.

There were relief staff available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to all children attending the service.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;

(c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;

(d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;

(e) the facilities available;

(f) the opening hours and fees;

(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.
- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (j) The service had a medication administration recording template book available that was completed in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was recorded electronically. All records were signed by parents.

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

Supporting relationships around Children

The service supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with their carers by ensuring continuity of care for children every day. Children's transition from room to room was gradual, facilitating children with time to adjust to any change of environment or change of carers.

Staff were observed to be actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games, joining in and inviting others to participate. Lots of frequent social conversations were observed in each room of the service. Staff reacted and responded appropriately to children's cues and gestures and their body language when children were tired or hungry. Staff were observed to speak in soft voice tones at all times coming to the child's level to ensure eye contact during conversations.

Staff were in regular communication with children's parents and guardians through the use of electronic apps. Here information on children's care needs such as their sleep patterns, how they had eaten and played were documented throughout the day.

Mentoring programs were in place for new staff members. Documentary evidence was available to show that regular staff meetings were held along with daily informal discussions between staff and management.

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:

On inspection the following was observed:

All external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the premises unsupervised. All internal doors were appropriately secured where necessary to prevent children accessing unsafe areas. All emergency exit fire doors were unobstructed. All outdoor play areas were safely secured with high fences and hedging surrounding each outdoor space. Hot water at all wash handbasins was thermostatically controlled and measured temperatures between 39 and 43 degrees celsius on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

A safe sleep policy was in place at the service, and staff were observed following the guidelines as detailed in the procedures. Good quality standard cots and beds were used. Safety mattresses were provided. Cot barrier heights were sufficient to prevent a child from falling from a cot. Sleep was child led and access to sleep facilities in a suitable environment was provided when a child showed signs of tiredness and required rest.