

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK162
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Name of Service:	Starting Small Standing Tall
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Address of Service:	Ballysimon Road, Crossagalla Industrial Estate, Ballysimon, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 R1W0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mella Byrne, Pamela Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	11/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	114	PM	98
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla. Estuary House Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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

This privately owned full day care service opened in 2005. It caters for children from six months to six years of age. It has a maximum capacity for approximately 173 children.

The opening hours are from 07:30 – 18:00 hours, Monday – Friday for 51 weeks of the year.

The premises are a 2-storey purpose built childcare facilities located in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Limerick city. The service has 9 playrooms in operation; this includes an outdoor sessional service.

A ball playroom and sensory room are also available for the children's play and development.

The service has two dedicated sleep rooms, a kitchen and sanitary facilities for the children and adults. A number of outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises facilitate the children to spend lots of time outdoors.

Staffing

There are 2 registered providers who jointly own and manage the service. There is a deputy manager and a supervisor available each day.

There are 29 staff members employed in the service. The staff working directly with the children have an appropriate qualification 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

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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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 (2)

Regulation 19 (1)(a)

Regulation 25

Regulation 29

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 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*
- (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-

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- (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) The registered providers were the named persons in charge, and a deputy was available to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection the registered providers were present, and the staff roster indicated that the registered providers or the deputy were available on the premises each day.

(c) There was a clear management structure 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) The files of 8 new staff members working in the service since the last inspection dated the 17th of February 2025 were reviewed. Also, the garda vetting for all the other staff members including the registered providers were reviewed.

(a) There were 9 written and validated references submitted by staff from previous employers on file.

(b) There were 7 written and validated references submitted by staff from sources other than past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for 29 staff members employed to work in the service. The Garda vetting for 27 staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024. Garda vetting renewal for 2 staff was not dated within the last three years. Please refer to Regulation 23 Safety for additional information

(d) Police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside of jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.

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(4) There were 26 staff members with the appropriate childcare qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

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

On the day of the inspection there were 23 childcare staff working and supervising 114 children in the morning and there were 17 childcare staff working and supervising 98 children in the afternoon.

The 2 registered providers were available throughout the day if required.

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

Relationship and Interactions around children:

The service supports children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with the staff members.

There was a key person assigned to each child. The staff knew each child individually by name, their likes, dislikes and interest. When talking to the children they got down to their level and were observed making eye contact.

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They were observed listening to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, their feelings and thoughts and their experiences both verbally and non-verbally by reading the children's cues, gestures and body language.

The staff were observed to respond to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and positive way. When a child got upset or tired they were observed offering comfort and nurture.

There were many opportunities for small and large group activities and play, to support children working together on different tasks, eating and playing together and to recognise and accept their differences and similarities.

Children benefited from frequent environment transitions, including extended outdoor play in well-furnished outdoor spaces across the site. Sheltered space outdoors ensured outdoor play opportunities were available in all weather conditions. A dedicated sensory room provided a quiet space for those needing a break from active and busy settings. An outdoor sessional service with a natural playground, gardening spaces, planting areas, and mud kitchens was accessible at the front of the premises. Children had access to outdoor wet gear and children in all areas of the service got to spend lots of time outdoors each day, regardless of weather conditions.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for 29 staff members including the registered providers. However, the garda vetting disclosure for 2 staff members was not dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from Jan 01/01/2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated in the Corrective and Preventive Form (CAPA) that:

The Garda vetting renewals for the 2 staff members has been submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

A vetting tracking system was already in place within the service; however, this has been reviewed and strengthened to ensure more robust monitoring of all re-vetting applications. Enhancements include clearer

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recording of submission dates, expected return timelines, and documented follow-up intervals for outstanding disclosures.

Responsibility for oversight has been clearly assigned to a designated staff member, with all follow-up actions recorded.

Procedures have also been updated to ensure that re-vetting applications are initiated well in advance of expiry timelines to allow sufficient time for processing and receipt of updated disclosures.

An updated vetting tracking log has been implemented and is in use to support ongoing compliance

Summary Comment

The Garda vetting renewal for the two staff members received into the inspectorate was reviewed and deemed to meets the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23.

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) There were 16 staff members working in the service with the updated certification in first aid responder (FAR) for children.

Also, the service has enrolled 8 staff members for FAR refresher course in April 2026 and 9 staff members for FAR course in May 2026.

A first aid officer was also appointed at the facility.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored on the ground floor and first floor of the facility.

(b)The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

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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

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (a) The premises was of sound and stable structure and there were no visible defects.
 - (b) The entrance and exit doors were secure to prevent children from exiting and to prevent unauthorised access.
 - (c) Heating, ventilation and lighting were adequate in each area of the service.
 - (d) Each room and each sanitary area was clean and well maintained.
 - (e) Suitable sanitary facilities were available for both staff and children.
- All waste was managed appropriately.
- Hygienic hand washing and drying facilities were available.
- Hygienic nappy changing facilities were available.