

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK171
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Name of Service:	Tall Trees Childcare Springfield
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Address of Service:	Springfield, Old Singland Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 K577
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23 April 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St. Limerick
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. .Browne
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Title:	Early Years Inspector(s)
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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 service has five playrooms in operation, one sleep room, a kitchen, nappy changing and sanitary facilities for children and adults and outdoor play areas to the back of the premises.
A school aged service is also available on the premises.

Staffing

There are 17 staff members working in the pre-school and school aged service.
The person in charge and the deputy person are available on site too, if required, and an additional two staff members are working in the kitchen and on cleaning duties.
The staff working with the children all have childcare qualifications which range from QQI Level 5 to Level 8.

Methodology

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 regulations 9, 10, 11, 19, 29, 30 and 32. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 *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-

- (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.

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection.

There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(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 five new staff who had recently commenced working in the service were viewed on the day of inspection, and the Garda vetting for the remaining staff member was also viewed.
- (a) Two written and validated references were available for these new staff members employed to work at the service.
- (b) References were submitted by staff from other reputable sources where two past employers references were not available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of a Garda Síochána were available for the five new staff employed to work at the service. The Garda vetting for all the staff members were 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 1 January 2024.
- (d) Police vetting was available for four of the new staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

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

The following policies were reviewed and in place in the service.

- The complaints policy.
- The supervision of staff policy.
- The policy on the use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices.
- The behaviour management policy.
- The nappy changing policy.

Management at the service demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to developing, approving, distributing and reviewing the policies of the service.

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) There were 44 pre-school children aged 1 – 6 years being supervised by 8 staff members working across 3 playrooms at the time of the inspection. The adult/child ratio in these pre-school rooms was correct, and there were sufficient relief staff to assist at busy periods and to cover staff break times throughout the day. The person in charge and the deputy person were also available on site too if required and an additional two staff were working in the kitchen and on cleaning duties.

Additional staff members were also present to cater for the school aged children present on the premises on the day of the inspection.

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

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS

Healthy eating was promoted within the service with fresh hot meals provided daily. Children had all meals and snacks in their designated rooms, and mealtimes were observed to be a sociable occasion for the children. For dinner a chicken and tarragon casserole was served with mashed potatoes, and at mid-afternoon, the snack included a fruit yogurt made with whole plain yogurt and strawberries on site and served with a wide variety of fruit such as apples/bananas/oranges/grapes and raisins. The children were observed having enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed. The food and snacks

were provided by the service and were served at regular times throughout the day. Bottles and beakers of water were accessible on low shelving in each room for the children.

A separate sleep room was provided for children under 2 years of age who required a sleep, with enough standard cots accessible to the children in the Cubs wobbler room. Additional sleep beds were available for the children over 2 years of age who may require a sleep. Designated rest areas were accessible in all rooms of the service throughout the day.

Adults were observed to work well with all the children in their care, responding to them in a timely manner, using soft tones of voice and making eye contact with them.

Children had freedom of movement in each of the rooms to choose activities they liked. Children had opportunities to be outside as often as possible. Gross motor play was facilitated outdoors on the play equipment and climbing frames, and on the ride on toys in the all-weather surface. Lots of opportunities for children to challenge their own capabilities within safe limits were available.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Each playroom had safe and comfortable spaces for the children to explore and play. Rooms had low level tables and chairs to facilitate tabletop activities and dining at mealtimes. Open low-level shelving provided storage for toys and equipment. Defined interest areas were provided where equipment and play materials were accessible in each room. Adult seating was available to facilitate staff sitting with children during the day.

The atmosphere in each room was unhurried and encouraging, and children in each room appeared content and all were actively engaged in numerous activities. Large outdoor areas were located at the rear of the building. Here, children had opportunities to develop gross motor skills while running, balancing, climbing, gardening, digging and using ride on toys. A range of materials were available to support children's play, movement, learning and exploration exclusive to the outside areas.

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

(e) The upstairs playroom had renovation work done since the last inspection in 2024. A sanitary facility consisting of two toilets, two wash hand basins and a nappy unit was constructed in the landing area at the top of the stairs.

There was running cold and hot water, a supply of liquid soap and drying facilities. The area appeared safe and secure for the children and the staff. The door at the top of the stairs was closed, and staff said it remains closed when occupied by the children and staff.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) Following changes made to the upstairs playroom the additional floor space available was sufficient to accommodate the proposed 106 pre-school children in the morning.

(2) The required minimum amount of floor space was determined by the age range of each preschool child attending and the type of care each child was registered for in the service.

The Cheetah playroom located upstairs in the service has made the required changes to increase the floor space to accommodate the additional number of preschool children in attendance each morning.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) The service's complaints policy specified:
- (a) The procedure to be followed by a person making a complaint in relation to the service.
 - (b) The way the complaint shall be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedure for keeping the complainant informed about how their complaint had been dealt with.
- (2) (a) A record in writing was kept of a recent complaint made to the registered provider.
- (b) The complaint was duly dealt with in accordance with the registered provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a):
- (a) Included the nature of the complaint and the way the complaint was dealt with.
 - (b) Was open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

There was evidence available in the complaints file to demonstrate how each of the above procedures were followed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School