

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK186		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	TLC Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	116 Templegreen Station Road Newcastle West Co Limerick		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V42P635		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Joan Hester		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26 <sup>TH</sup> May 2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	54	PM 53
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Ryan and M Riordan		
<b>Title:</b>	Early years inspectors		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

TLC Childcare is a private early years' service which first opened in July 2012 and operates from a purpose-built building in an urban residential area. It is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day education and care to preschool children aged 0 - 6 years of age. It operates from 8.00hrs to 18.30hrs and caters for a maximum of 56 pre-school children. The facility has four pre-school rooms, Bumblebee room (1-2 years), Ladybird room (2-3 years), Butterfly room (3 -5 years) and Caterpillar room ( 3-5 years). There is a dedicated sleep room with cots for children aged less than 2 years. The service has a large outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment. Cooked food is delivered each day to the service from the registered providers' second pre-school facility at Woodfield, Killeline, Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick.

### Staffing

The registered provider operates two childcare services located in the town of Newcastlewest. This service employs 17 staff, and all staff members have childcare qualifications. The registered provider works on site alternating between both services.

### 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.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,21,23,24, 25,26,28 and 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 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.*

*(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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) On the day of the inspection, the registered provider was the designated person in charge. There was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.

(2) The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent, as the following documents were available on file for all 17 staff members and were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(a) References were available from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References were available from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 11 persons who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) All staff had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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 person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of the inspection, there were 9 staff working with and supervising 54 pre-school children in the morning, and there were 9 staff supervising 53 pre-school children in the afternoon.

- Bumble Bee Room - There were 8 pre-school children (1-2 years) and 2 staff present.
- Ladybird Room - There were 12 pre-school children (2-3 years) and 2 staff present.
- Butterfly Room - There were 18 pre-school children (3-5 years) and 3 staff present.
- Caterpillar Room - There were 16 pre-school children (3-5 years) and 2 staff present.

Additional staff were available to cover for staff breaks and office management.

### 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:**

Meals and snacks were prepared and cooked at a secondary establishment owned and managed by the registered provider within the town. On the day of the inspection, spaghetti bolognese was served for dinner. In the butterfly room, where children aged 3-5 years were accommodated, meals were served on ceramic plates with stainless steel cutlery, moving away from the use of plastic alternatives. Staff also offered second helpings to all children. Ample time was provided for each child to enjoy their meal without feeling rushed.

Sanitary accommodation was close to each pre-school room, with nappy changing facilities available where required. Toilet training was tailored to each child's developmental stage and readiness rather than their age. Children aged 1-2 years were placed in cots in the sleep room when staff recognised signs of tiredness. These sleeping children were monitored every 10 minutes, with checks recorded on an electronic device available in each room.

Staff demonstrated effective interaction with children, utilising soft tones of voice, addressing children by name, getting down to their level, and maintaining eye contact. Children were given the choice to participate in other activities within the room.

For the older children, work was collected in individual scrapbooks, labelled with their picture, name and date of birth.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

This full day care service was purpose built and comprised of three playrooms, sanitary accommodation areas, a sleep room, and a large outdoor play area. A variety of play equipment suited to the age and developmental stage of the child was available in each room and in the outdoor play area. Children had wellingtons and wet gear available for use in the outdoor play area during poor weather conditions. Defined interest areas included reading areas, construction areas, home corners, puzzles, buggies, manipulative play areas, and small world areas. Each room had low level tables to facilitate dining and tabletop activities.

Children were observed playing in the secure outdoor play area, which was equipped with outdoor play equipment such as playhouses, picnic benches, tyres, swings, climbing frames, a seesaw, basketball hoop, and adult seating. A large canopied/roofed area allowed for more outdoor play during adverse weather conditions. All age groups were observed playing outdoors on the day of the inspection.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials are available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

1. Reading books that were available to the children in the ladybird room and the butterfly room were observed to be torn, with pages and covers missing and could not support the appropriate development of literacy skills. The shelf unit displaying the books was broken. This was identified as a non-compliance in the inspection report dated 26 March 2024.
2. There were a number of broken toys in the outside play area, such as a sand box, see-saw, and the handles on trikes, which posed a potential safety hazard. This was identified as a non-compliance in the inspection report dated 26 March 2024.
3. Paint work on the chairs in the butterfly room was worn and paint work on the legs of the chairs in the outside play area was rusted. The chipped paint on the outdoor chairs posed a potential risk to children.
4. The paint work on two child sized picnic benches in the outside play area were stained and worn. This made them difficult to clean.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The books have been replaced from spare supplies and the shelf unit has been replaced. Staff hours have been increased to ensure all equipment is available and in good condition.
2. The plastic sand box has been removed, a new wooden one will be installed. The see-saw has been repaired and the handle covering the trikes was put back on. As part of the playground checks the manager will be monitoring all the equipment.
3. & 4 These items have been repainted and the manager will be monitoring this as part of the weekly checklist.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to all points outlined.

### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider to address the non compliances meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 21.

### 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:

1. During sleep times in the Ladybird room, all of the furniture had to be removed from the central space in the room in order to allow the sleep beds to be placed on the floor. Consequently, toys and play equipment were stacked high on an armchair and posed a safety hazard to both the children and the staff.

#### Infection Control:

2. Cloth towels in the nappy changing area next to the bumble bee room were not single use. These were used for cleaning which posed a risk of cross infection. This was identified as a non-compliance in the inspection report dated 26 March 2024.
3. A foot operated waste disposal bin and a foot operated bin for the disposal of nappies were not in working order in the sanitary accommodation off the Ladybird room. This posed a risk of cross infection as staff needed to use their hands to open and close the bins.
4. The two-toilet bowls in the sanitary accommodation off the Lady bird room were not adequately cleaned which posed a risk of cross infection.
5. The seats of the six-seater buggy contained dirt and the surfaces were worn and damaged making them difficult to clean, posing a risk of cross infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Staff will ensure that play equipment will not be placed on top of the armchair.

### Infection Control:

2. Individual paper towels are available in the sanitary accommodation.
3. The two bins have been replaced and the manager will be monitoring this as part of the weekly checklist.
4. The toilets have been deep cleaned with limescale remover and will be treated weekly for limescale.
5. The buggy has been removed as all children are walking.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

No documentation was submitted.

#### Infection Control:

Photographs

### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider to address the non-compliances identified meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 23.

## 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) Staff ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by an employee in a timely manner on the childcare App.
- (3)(a) No person other than the following could enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.
- (i) pre-school child attending the service.

- (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child.
- (iii) an employee.
- (iv) an unpaid worker.

### Non-Compliance Information

(3)(b) A visitors book was not available to record on a daily basis in writing persons who entered the premises other than parents and staff.

The visitor book must include the following information - date, person's name, their contact number, their reason for entry, the name of the person who approved their entry and the check-in and out times.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

We have implemented a digital visitor signing in system.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No documentation was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider address the non-compliance identified and meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 24.

## 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 four staff trained as first aid responders (FAR) with all certificates in date for children available.

(2) (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the hallway.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

### 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.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The fire drills were practiced monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 22 May 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in September 2024, and a record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The fire and smoke alarm system were tested and serviced in September 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room of the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children in attendance.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required..

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. Ceiling tiles in the butterfly room, bumble bee room, and the nappy change area off the bumble bee room were stained and showed signs of mould and dampness. This posed a potential hazard to the safety and well-being of the children who were present in the rooms and was previously identified as a non-compliance in the inspection report dated 26 March 2024.

2. Paint work on the rear wall in the outside play area was stained and there were sections that were unfinished.
3. Areas surrounding the external windowsills were covered in cobwebs and dust.
4. There were two sections of the perspex roof in the outside play area which had been removed and the rain on the day was observed to leak on to the floor.
5. Sections of the bark mulch covering the outside play area were unsafe as the weed block plastic sheeting was torn and exposed, which posed a tripping hazard to both the staff and the children.
6. Paint work in each of the playrooms was stained and required repainting.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The ceiling tiles have been replaced and the manager will monitor the ceiling tiles in each room on a weekly basis and will follow up with the landlord if there any further problems.
2. The exterior paint work has been completed and will be monitored regularly.
3. The outside of the building has been power washed and it will be included in the weekly checklist for the manager to monitor.
4. No response received.
5. The bark mulch has been redistributed over the playground to level the area affected.
6. The entire building is scheduled to be repainted during our summer break and painting will be ongoing.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider address the non compliances except for point 4 where no response was received.