

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LM003
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Blacklion Childcare Services
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Toam, Blacklion, Co. Cavan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F91 HW86
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Aileen Leonard
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day Care
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	29/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM	38
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello, K Folan
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Blacklion Childcare Services is a not for profit early years' service in the border village of Blacklion Co. Cavan. The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 65 children aged 0-6 years and is open from 08:00-18:00, Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose-built single storey building with an additional prefabricated building located adjacent to the main building. There are four playrooms in operation. In the main building there is a "wobbler" room, "toddlers" and "junior preschool" with "preschool" located in the prefabricated building. There are three sleep rooms, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation in the main building. Three outdoor areas are available on the premises.

### Staffing

Eighteen adults are employed to work in the service. Sixteen adults provide direct care to the preschool children, including the person in charge. Two adults are employed to work in the kitchen. The registered provider does not work directly with the preschool children.

### 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 and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1) (2) (3) (4), 11, 19 (1), 22, 23 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27. 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.

### Additional Information

The service received two opportunities to submit the required evidence in the corrective and preventive action process on the 25 August 2025 and the 15 September 2025. Some required information remains outstanding.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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.*

*(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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of seventeen adults employed in the service and the registered provider were reviewed. Twenty four written and verified past employer and six written and verified references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of fifteen adults in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 17 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting was available for one adult in the service who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

## Non-Compliance Information

(9)

(2) (a) (b)

Three adults had no validated references on file on the day of inspection.

(2) (c)

An immediate action notice was issued on the day of inspection as one adult present had no garda vetting and was working directly with the preschool children. A response submitted by the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider gave assurances that the person without garda vetting will not be working directly with children until garda vetting is secured.

(9) (3)

The procedures had not been completed prior to an adult having access to a preschool child in relation to four adults employed in the service.

(d)

International police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

It could not be determined if international police vetting was required for two adults due to the absence of an employment record.

(4)

There was no qualification on file for one adult who worked directly with preschool children.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(9) (2) (a) (b)

All staff now have validated references on file. New staff will be unable to start until they have two written references sent over and validated by the manager.

(2) (c)

Management had told member of staff that day to leave the workplace and will not be able to attend back until Garda Vetting has since come through and that adult is back at work. We will ensure that no new staff members

start in the service until garda vetting is received.

(9) (3)

All references have been received and validated. This will be completed prior to employment.

(d)

Management has looked into finding the correct Police vetting for registered provider. Registered provider has recently submitted application for international police vetting via post. We will take careful consideration to thoroughly read through CV's before employment starts to ensure that there are no gaps and to look to see if they have travelled or worked internationally.

(4)

The qualification is currently on file now for the adult. Management will ensure certification will be on file going forward.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- Validated references were submitted.
- Garda vetting submitted.
- No documentary evidence submitted.
- Qualification submitted.

#### **Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address some of the non-compliances identified on inspection. International police vetting remains outstanding. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

### 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were ten adults working directly with 35 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and 11 adults working directly with 38 children in the afternoon.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Wobbler Room: 5 children aged from one years to years were supported by two adults.
- Toddler Room: 5 children aged from one year to three years old were supported by two adults.
- Junior preschool: 7 children aged from two years to three years were supported by two adults.
- Senior Preschool: 18 children aged from four to six years old were supported by four adults.

In the afternoon at approximately 1:30p.m. the following ratios were observed:

- Wobbler Room: 5 children aged from one years to two years were supported by two adults.
- Toddler Room: 8 children aged from one year to three years old were supported by two adults.
- Junior preschool: 8 children aged from two years to three years were supported by two adults.
- Senior Preschool: 17 children aged from four to six years old were supported by four adults.

### 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*

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

- The 'wobbler room' was set up with a variety of toys and resources to support the developmental needs of the young children in the room. Baskets of toys were stored in low level accessible shelving and resources included musical instruments, sensory toys, animals and small world resources and soft toys. The room was brightly painted with colourful decorations and pictures of families on the walls displayed at low levels maintaining the connection to home. Staff were observed to support the children in their choice, moving from one activity to another at the child's requests. Some of the young children are just beginning to walk and this was encouraged by staff, ensuring clear space was provided and children prompted and encouraged to move from one area to another with praise and encouragement.
- The 'Toddler room' was decorated with the children's artwork which added colour to the walls. Interest areas included home corners with kitchen and resources, dolls and buggies and dress up areas. Low level accessible shelving was equipped with buckets of magnets, small world items, building blocks, tabletop activities including puzzles and jigsaws. Construction areas were provided with cars and trucks and a variety of building materials. Children were engaged in arts and crafts on the day guided by the staff. The children appeared to enjoy this experience eager to show the inspector their work.

- The 'Junior preschool' room had well defined interest areas to encourage exploration. Rest facilities were present in the room, small sofa's, mats and cushions were available. Toys and equipment suitable for the age and stage of the children in the room such as construction bricks, figurines, animals and dinosaurs were stored on low level accessible shelving. An art activity was set up for the children who wished to participate, and children had the choice to choose a different activity if they wished.
- In the 'Preschool room', photographs of activities the children had participated in throughout the year were displayed on the wall as well as seasonal artwork. The room was well resourced with equipment and materials suitable for the preschool child. Boxes containing toys such as transport sets, open ended materials and puzzles were accessible to the children. The children were observed participating enthusiastically in movement, songs and dance routines that they had been learning throughout the year. The children were familiar with the routine of in the service and were involved in the tidy up of the session and helped to prepare the room for dinner time.
- The service has a healthy eating policy and provides all meals and snacks to the children at regular intervals.
- Nappy changing took place at regular intervals and more frequently when required. On the day of the inspection the staff were observed supporting and encouraging a number of children who were toilet learning, offering prompts and praise to the children.
- Designated sleep rooms were in place for children in all rooms. The wobbler sleep room provided standard cots for those children under two years of age. Stackable floor beds were provided for children in the toddler and junior preschool. Staff monitored sleep by ten minute physical sleep checks.
- The service has a key worker system in place with each staff assigned responsibility for designated children.
- Communication with parents is facilitated at drop off and pick up times. The service using a technology software application to provide live updates to parents regarding their children's day such as sleep times, activities and eating patterns.
- Staff members were found to be kind and responsive to the preschool children with needs attended to in a timely manner. Children appeared happy and content in the company of the staff members with conversation and laughter observed in all care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

A nappy changing area for the toddler room was located in the junior preschool bathroom and changes were completed in view of children using the bathroom area. No privacy screening was in place posing a dignity risk to the toddler and junior preschool children.

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

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

In a written response the registered provider stated:

We have placed a temporary privacy screening in the bathroom to provide privacy. A more permanent screening has been ordered, and we are awaiting delivery.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all food is provided by the service. A two-week menu plan outlined a variety of varied and nutritious food suitable for the preschool children attending the service. On the day a morning snack of a fruit platter and crackers was served. The main meal of the day was potato mash, mince and carrots. Portions were adequate and seconds were available if required. The children were observed to enjoy the meals offered. Portable drinking water was served with all meals and snacks and available in the care rooms throughout the day.

### 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:

- The main door was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- A risk assessment was in place while works were carried out to the magnetic locks on two gates which management had observed to be broken prior to the inspector's arrival.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to mealtimes and after using the toilet in the older children's rooms.

##### Administration of Medication:

- On discussion with staff members, they were knowledgeable about the medication management policy within the service.
- Support plans were in place for children with allergies who required a medical response.
- Medication was stored out of reach of the preschool children.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Standard cots were available for babies under two years of age.
- Stackable floor beds were available for children over two years of age.
- All standard cots had the required waterproof coverings and cellular blankets were provided.

##### Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was clearly displayed in the car park of the service.
- Fire evacuation notices were displayed on the walls of the care rooms.
- Emergency evacuation doors were clear of obstruction on the day of the inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Trailing flexes were observed in the wobbler sleep room and main wobbler room posing a risk to the preschool child.
2. Low level visibility strips were not present in the glass doors in the wobbler and toddler room posing a safety risk for the young preschool children.

3. Children in the junior preschool aged between two and three years of age were observed to be playing with 'foam balls'. The manufacturers guidelines state that these are not suitable for children under three years of age.
4. Garda vetting was available for 17 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
5. The vents in the junior preschool and the preschool sanitary accommodation were dusty and required cleaning.
6. The bins in the junior preschool and preschool sanitary accommodation were not foot operated pedal bins.
7. An electrical box storing the services cctv monitoring system and alarms was located on the wall in the sleep room for the preschool children. This could pose a safety risk if this electrical box is not stored and maintained correctly.

### Safe Sleep:

8. In the toddler sleep room, two children under two years were observed to be sleeping on stackable floor beds. These beds do not provide the required support for children under two years of age. On discussion with staff, no risk assessment was completed for the use of these stackable floor beds and evidence of a discussion with parents was not available.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

1. Trailing flexes are now secure.
2. Visibility strips have been installed.
3. Foam balls have been removed. A toy safety check has been introduced to ensure that age appropriate toys are used in the room.
4. All garda vetting that had expired has been submitted and one has not returned.
5. The vents have been cleaned. A new cleaning schedule has been introduced to include cleaning of vents.
6. Foot pedal operated bins have been purchased.
7. Electrical box is maintained correctly, and our electrician does periodically check on this equipment every three months. Risk assessment in place. Checks and testing carried out by qualified personnel only.

Regular checks carried out by qualified electrician. Annual PAT testing carried out. Floor beds have been moved so no child is lying directly underneath electric box.

### Infection Control:

8. Couches have been removed and replaced with soft matting and cushions.
9. The bin has been replaced. This will be included in maintenance checks.
10. Management printed of the HSE guidelines and put them above the nappy changing area about the correct procedures to follow when changing nappies. Management will monitor nappy changes to ensure correct procedure is followed.
11. Management have been displayed above sinks in all rooms with pictures on what clothes are used to clean children's faces and the different clothes to clean surfaces, tables & chairs.
12. Nappy changing mat has been removed.
13. Cots are now spaced correctly. Tuslas safe sleep guidance has been informed to all staff members.

### Safe Sleep:

14. From inspection until now only one child is now under two so the correct beds that are required to support children under two are now in place. A copy of Tusla guidelines on safe sleep has been displayed in the sleep room and a discussion with the staff members about the required support in using the correct beds for children under two. Posters have been displayed in each sleep room following the safe sleep policy. Management had a staff meeting and explained to all staff members that during sleeps are commencing all staff members must stay within the sleep room.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photograph of secured flexes submitted.
2. Photograph of visibility strip submitted.
3. Check list submitted.
4. Vetting remains outstanding.
5. Photograph of cleaned vent submitted.
6. Photograph of bins submitted.

#### Infection Control:

8. Documentary evidence submitted.

- 9. Photographic evidence submitted.
- 10. Photographic evidence submitted.
- 11. Photographic evidence submitted.
- 12. Photographic evidence submitted
- 13. Photographic evidence submitted.

**Safe Sleep:**

- 14. Photographic evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted adequately address most of the non compliance found on inspection. However, no evidence has been received regarding the evidence of renewal of vetting for adult and this regulation 23.4 remains outstanding.

**Part VI - Safety**

**Regulation 28 - Insurance**

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

**Compliance Information**

The service demonstrated adequate insurance with a certificate for 115 preschool children availing of a full day care service up until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

On the day between 13:30 and 14:00, Four preschool children in one sleep room and five toddlers in another sleep room did not have any adult supervision. Adults on site completed ten-minute sleep checks, however the required supervision for sleeping children in this age group is that an adult has to be present and required adult child ratios maintained.

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

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

All staff members are aware that they need to stay in the sleep room at all times with the children that are sleeping and all adult child ratios are maintained at all time. Management will check up daily that there is one staff member with the sleeping children at all times.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of sign.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection.