

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN007
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Name of Service:	Bright Stars Childcare
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Address of Service:	Killycrum, Doohamlet, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A75 TX21
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bronagh McMahon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Road Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Bright Stars Childcare is a privately owned service which is in operation since 2004. It provides a full daycare, part time sessional service to children aged 0 years – 6 years. The service caters for a maximum of 50 children. This service is in a rural setting outside Doohamlet Castleblayney Co. Monaghan. It operates from a purpose-built building. There are 3 care rooms, sanitary accommodations, an office and a kitchen. There are a number of different outdoor areas to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

There are staff 10 members including the registered provider employed in the service who 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

A safety Immediate Action Notice was issued on inspection on 11/9/2025 in relation to raised radiator surface temperatures which were a potential burns risk. A satisfactory response addressing the non-compliance was received from the registered provider on the 11/9/25.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

All 10 staff files were reviewed:

(2)(a)(b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 9 members of staff.
- One staff member had 1 written and validated reference and 1 written reference.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members however a Garda vetting disclosure for 1 staff member was not found to be within the re-vetting timeframes as stated below in Regulation 23.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection international police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that 9 of the 10 staff members working directly with the preschool children had a minimum Level 5 qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) The second reference for one staff member was not validated.

(4) Documentary evidence was not available for inspection for 1 staff member to show they had a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Staff member's reference was validated and submitted.

The registered provider has stated that measures are put in place prior to a new member of staff commencing in the service, that references are received and validated and signed by management.

(4) The staff member referenced is currently present for training experience while completing modules to obtain an overall Level 5 qualification and not counted in ratio, is not to cover breaks or left unsupervised with the children. All existing staff have a full childcare certificate and management will ensure that a full childcare Level 5 qualification will be obtained prior to a new staff member commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of reference.

Copy of updated staff rota.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response and evidence. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Infection Control Policy in the service was inadequate, for example;

1. It did not specify the best practice guidance on cleaning toys and equipment.
2. It did not specify how soothers in the service were to be stored and cleaned.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Infection Control Policy was reviewed and updated to include best practice guidance and policy on cleaning toys and equipment. Also added was a soother storage policy.

Policies will be reviewed to ensure sure they follow best practice guidance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of updated policies – Bright Stars Cleaning Program and Soother Storage Policy

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate reviewed updated policy and the non-compliance has been addressed.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

Senior Preschool Room:

There were 14 preschool children (aged 2 years 10 months to 4 years 6 months) attending this room with 2 staff members.

The child adult ratios were correct.

Junior Preschool Room:

There were 14 preschool children (aged 2 years 6 months to 3 years 3 months) attending this room with 2 staff.

One additional staff member was present in the rooms as 'a floater' covering for breaks and the registered provider when they attended to kitchen duties.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Creche Room:

There were 10 preschool children aged (1 year and 3 months to 2 years and 6 months) attending this room with 3 adults.

The child adult ratios were correct.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times.

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:

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

Non-Compliance Information

The staff rota available for inspection in the service was inadequate:

- It did not state the dates the documented shifts pertained to.
- Some staff members had 2 different finishing times specified.
- Breaktimes and cover were not included on the rota.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff rota has been updated to show the exact hours that are being worked by staff each week everyday Monday – Friday. In addition a staff member is marked as student and the summary at the bottom of the rota shows students are not counted in child- staff ratio nor left unsupervised with the children or to cover breaks.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated staff rota showing the shifts the staff work everyday, allocated break times and student is also indicated on rota.

Summary Comment

The inspector accepts the registered provider’s response and supporting documentation. The non-compliance has been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Compliance Information

There were 3 care rooms in operation in the service namely the Senior and Junior Preschool Rooms plus the Creche Room.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children’s learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service.

Basic needs:

- Throughout the service the children were observed to move freely in the care rooms. All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area and the children were dressed appropriately for going outside. Staff from the Creche Room were observed to assist and support the children with their ride-on toys of choice.
- In the Creche Room child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children’s routines, which were displayed on the wall. The staff were also alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping when the inspectors arrived at the service and throughout the day.

- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children in the various rooms after toileting.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner in the Creche Room with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- Attention was given to personal care such as nose blowing, the use of bibs for feeding and cleaning faces of the smaller children after their dinner.
- Dinners were homemade on the day and consisted of mashed potatoes and carrots, sausages and gravy. In the rooms the consistency of the dinners was age appropriate. Dinners were saved for children who were sleeping and served once they woke up.
- Drink cups and bottles were available to the children on the windowsill or in the fridge.

Supporting Relationships:

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in all the rooms. The staff in the Creche Room were observed to use positive supportive language with the children to encourage them to complete a task and support their independence e.g. *“what apron would you like today?”*, *“would you like to get your drink?”* and *“well done”*. In the Junior Preschool Room the staff were observed to offer support to the children if they required *“...would you like me to help you? good boy...yummy dinner”* the child was then observed to eat his dinner.
- The staff in the rooms used an electronic application the “app” to communicate with parents about their child’s activities, sleep and food intake during the day. The staff were also observed to communicate verbally with parents at collection time.
- A key worker system was in place in the rooms. The ‘key persons’ and allocated children notices were on display in the care rooms. This supported the development of positive relationships with the children and their families. The key worker was responsible for documenting activities and progress of the children’s learning and development.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Junior Preschool Room the door to the toilet was wedged open and therefore the children using the toilet could be seen from the care room and by the children lining up to use the toilet. This does not maintain the privacy and dignity of the child during toileting. This is also at variance with the services ‘Toileting Procedure’.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff ensure the door to the toilet is closed over preventing children and others in the care room from viewing the children using the toilet and therefore respecting their privacy and dignity. The toileting policy and procedure is updated and maintained throughout the care rooms.

Summary Comment

The inspector accepts the registered provider's response and assurances given. The non-compliance is addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day,

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was 1 cot room off the Creche Room with 5 cots for the children under 2 years of age who required a sleep. Daybeds and bed linen were available for any children over the age of 2 years who also required a sleep. There were cushions, child sized soft seating and mats in all the rooms where a child could relax and read a book.

(3)(a) There were a number of a well-resourced and developed outdoor areas outside to the rear and side of the building which were fully secured and fenced.

Area 1 outside the Creche Room there was a large, concreted area. There was a small plastic climbing frame and slide with a rubber mat at the bottom of the slide. The children had access to numerous ride- on toys in this area, plus chalk for drawing and balls.

There were 5 separate enclosed areas off the concreted area:

- A gravel/construction area with toys and equipment.
- An area with a playhouse with a gate and fence.

- An area with artificial grass surface and plastic playhouse.
- An area with small plastic slide on a safety surface.
- A large safety surfaced play area with wooden train, a large wooden climbing frame and slide with swing set comprising of a baby swing 3 low level regular swing seats and a 2-person rocker swing which were supervised by a staff member when in use.

Area 2 was located off the Senior and Junior Preschool rooms. This was an enclosed area with a concrete surface. A large wooden climbing frame with a climbing wall, a slide and a basket swing were present and observed in use. A variety of ride-on trikes, bubble cars and tractors were in use by the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(a)

1. There was no safety impact attenuating surface under the large wooden climbing frame with slide outside the Senior Preschool Room. This is a health and safety and potential injury hazard.
2. Some of the chicken wire fencing had sharp bits protruding which were a potential injury hazard should a child 'hit off' them.
3. There was a crack in the slide of the plastic climbing frame on the concreted area which was a potential pinch or injury hazard. In addition, one of the plastic platform areas on the frame was broken and a replacement surface was in place which was observed to move up and down when a child stood on it.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider stated that adequate safety matting was placed under the climbing frame and pizza swing suitable to meet health and safety requirements. Management will ensure adequate safety matting is always placed under children's play equipment meeting health and safety requirement and according to the requirements of the children's climbing equipment.

2. Chicken wire fence has all been checked and any sharp edges have been removed and repaired.

3. Cracked climbing frame slide was removed from the service.

Regular checks on fence safety and outdoor slides and play equipment included on risk assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the registered provider's responses and supporting information in relation to the non-compliances identified.

In relation to point 1, the inspector accepts the assurances given by the registered provider that:

- The safety impact matting provided to the areas around the frame is of an adequate depth and sufficient to prevent injury to a child should they fall from a height.
- That matting installed is of a depth recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

In relation to points 2 and 3, the registered provider's responses are accepted and the non-compliances are addressed.

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. At 10.55am the radiator surface temperatures in the Creche Room were recorded at 67.7 °C and in the Senior Preschool Room at 56.1 °C and 52 °C. These temperatures exceed the safe surface temperatures of 50 °C and are a potential burns risk. A safety Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider and an appropriate response was received.
2. 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 for 1 staff member.
3. A copper pipe was protruding through the wall adjacent to 1 of the cots in the sleep room. This was potentially accessible to any child using this cot. This is a health and safety risk.
4. One of the 3 cot mattresses checked was ill-fitting and a foothold was evident where a child's foot could get stuck. This is a health and safety risk.

Infection Control:

5. Staff confirmed that toys and equipment, soothers and mouthed toys are cleaned with a sterilising agent and hot water which is not an effective means of cleaning and a variance of best practice cleaning guidelines.
6. The nappy bins in the service require the user to handle the bin a number of times during the disposal process when placing the nappy inside the bin and were not lidded pedal operated bins. This is a cross contamination and infection control risk.
7. There was not a continuous supply of thermostatically controlled hot water in the service throughout the inspection i.e. at 12.45pm in the Junior Preschool Room and at 13.35pm in the Creche Room when the

water was checked it was cold. This does not allow for effective hand washing and is an infection control risk.

8. The nappy changing mat observed in use in the Junior Preschool was not maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Accumulations of dirt and particles were observed around the edges and in the folds.

Safe Sleep:

9. At 11.25 - 11.30am the staff member recording the sleep room temperature on the sleep log was not observed to check the room thermometer and recorded it as 19 °C, when the room thermometer was registering 22 – 22.5 °C. This practice was also confirmed by the staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- 1 and 3. The children were removed from the radiator area, heat was turned off and ensured no child was exposed to the radiators. The registered provider also ensured room stats were at an appropriate temperature of 18°C-20°C. Heat controllers to be fitted on radiators where children are exposed. Plumber was called and ensured the boiler was turned down to 43 – 50 °C to ensure the surface temperature and the copper pipe are within the recommended temperature range.
Staff will carry out radiator surface temperature checks and adhere to as part of daily room risk assessment.
2. The service applied for the staff member's vetting in June 2025. Staff member's updated Garda vetting disclosure obtained and submitted. The registered provider will ensure all vetting requiring updating is applied for as early as possible as it took 3 months for this Garda vetting to be obtained.
4. Registered provider measured and replaced cot mattress. Staff will ensure that there are no gaps in the cots between frame and mattress and that they are fitted properly in the cots.

Infection Control:

5. All staff know and use detergent for cleaning as indicated on updated cleaning policy and that a cleaning agent / hot soapy water before sterilising is an effective means of cleaning mouthed toys.
Staff training and update took place and a copy of the Bright Stars Cleaning Policy was given to each room for staff to sign as part of their cleaning duties.
6. All nappy bins were replaced by the manager with pedal operated bins. The registered provider will ensure pedal operated nappy bins are used and nappies are disposed of properly.

7. The registered provider ensures there is a continuous supply of hot water present at all times. Hot water is being topped up by using an immersion heating for all taps which are thermostatically controlled in the bathrooms. A time clock shows that the immersion heating is on during the day providing hot water. Staff must always ensure there is hot water available at all times for cleaning and hand washing.
8. The nappy changing mat was replaced in the Junior Preschool Room. Staff will ensure that the nappy changing mats are cleaned thoroughly and no dirt particles are observed around the edges.

Safe Sleep:

9. Staff members are all aware that they must observe the temperature in the sleep room and do observe it before writing it in the log. All staff will be reminded to observe the temperature of the sleep room each time a record is taken.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of room daily risk assessment, radiator surface temperature check, copy of Garda vetting disclosure, photographic evidence new mattress.

Infection Control:

Copy of updated policies and cleaning checklist, copy of purchase receipt.

Summary Comment

The response and supporting documentation submitted by the registered provider was reviewed and accepted by the inspector. The sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions provided will be assessed at the next inspection.

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

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available to the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times.

For example, one FAR cert was available for inspection and the person qualified was rostered to commence work at 8.30 am. On the day of inspection approximately 7 children were signed in as attending between 8am – 8.30am. This is a recurrent non-compliance identified on the last inspection in 2022 and at variance to the registered provider’s CAPA response at that time stating “*The manager has full FAR training and will send more staff members on FAR training to obtain certificates .The manager will ensure staff members have full up to date FAR Training certificates and the rota is covered at all times with qualified FAR trained staff*”. The corrective actions submitted following that particular inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Management will ensure FAR trained staff are always present on the premises at all times. The manager has FAR training therefore their start time will be 8am until a second member of staff obtains FAR training. As ratios must be maintained a 2nd member of staff will carryout training at a suitable time when the manager can ensure child – staff ratios are met.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of staff rota showing the register provider rostered daily from 8am.

Summary Comment

The registered provider’s assurances that there will be a member of staff with FAR training available at all times are accepted by the Inspectorate. This will be for review at the next inspection.