

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN055
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Name of Service:	Wonder Years
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Address of Service:	Cornafulla South, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	N37 V594
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Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Crehan, Sean Crehan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	40	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of service

This private pre-school service offers full day care and part time care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school and sessional care programmes are also offered from 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs, from Monday to Friday. The pre-school caters for children aged between 1 to 6 years of age. Additionally, a breakfast club from 8.00hrs to 9.00hrs and an afterschool programme from 14.00hrs to 18.00hrs is offered to school aged children with designated staff. This purpose-built pre-school service is located on its own grounds, to the rear of the registered providers home, in a rural location near the town of Athlone. There are six playrooms. On the ground floor, there was interconnected Caterpillar room (also named Baby room for children 1 to 2 years of age) and the Busy Bees room and the Butterfly room and the afterschool room. On the first floor, there is an interconnected Beehive room (also named Preschool room for children aged 3 to 5 years), the Gingerbread room and the Ladybirds room (also named the Montessori preschool room which was not in operation on the day of inspection). There is a designated sleep room, adjacent to the Caterpillar room, with six cots. Additionally, stackable beds are available for older pre-school children requiring sleep. The premises has its own kitchen, where children's main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. The pre-school children have access to various secure outdoor play areas to the rear, side, and front of the premises.

Staffing

There are a total of eighteen staff including the registered provider working in the premises. Documentary evidence indicates that sixteen staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. There is a designated chef employed to prepare, cook and serve the meals and snacks on site.

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:

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- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on Regulations 9,11,22,23,25,26,28 and 29. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Caterpillar room (1-2 years,) the Busy Bees room (2-3 years) and the Gingerbread room (4-5 Years).

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, deputy persons in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputize in the service.

(b) On the day of the inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and the registered provider arrived at 10:30hrs and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Documentary evidence in the form of staff rotas indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge on the day, it was determined that vetting for two new staff members required

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review. In addition, Garda vetting for all staff were within the three-year time frame and did not require review.

The following information was made available for inspection for the two new staff whose vetting files were reviewed:

- (a) and (b) Four validated written references on file, in respect of the two staff, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of all of the adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available on file for one of the adults who had lived outside of the state for longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent were available for the two new staff members who worked directly with the preschool children.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
- (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

(1) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service. The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

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(2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 40 children present.

6 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,

8 children were aged between 2-3years

26 children were aged between 3 to 5 years,

There were nine staff directly caring for these children. In the morning, the person in charge acted as childcare relief as required.

On the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 34 children present.

6 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,

6 children were aged between 2-3 years,

22 children were aged between 3 to 5 years,

There were eight staff directly caring for and supervising these children. The person in charge acted as childcare relief as required.

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

- From 8.00hrs to 9.00hrs, the service provided breakfast cereal and toast for any child who was hungry.
- From 10:00hrs the children had morning snack
- From 12:00hrs- 12:30hrs, the children had savoury mincemeat, vegetables and mashed potato. The children were offered extra food if they requested.
- At 15 30hrs the children had ham and cheese sandwiches, a selection of fresh fruits, yoghurts, and water to drink.
- The meals were cooked on site.
- The meals and snacks were of appropriate textures for infants and toddlers.
- The children attending the service on a full day care and part time basis had two meals and snacks. The children attending the full day care service had a hot meal provided by the service.
- The person in charge advised that the staff ensured that each meal snack had two food groups. The person in charge advised that there was a supply of food in the kitchen, for any child requiring additional food.

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- A four-week menu plan was displayed in the reception area for parent information.
- A drinks table was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to 'self-serve' their drinks.
- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in designated fridges.

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:

- There was a buzzer access system, at the main entrance front door.
- The staff only areas, office, kitchen, staff sanitary areas and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C and the sleep room temperature was maintained between 18 to 20°C as the children were sleeping.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hygienic hand washing was available.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- There were visibility posters on the glass doors as a safety precaution.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- Materials and play equipment, both indoors and outdoors, were observed to be safe for the pre-school children using them and in a good state of repair.
- Blind cords were securely fastened thereby preventing any potential risk.

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- Presently work is been completed to enhance drainage and sewerage system in a section of the outdoor area. The area was adequately cordoned off to prevent the children accessing this area.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue and after outdoor play.
- There was a designated nappy changing area with a designated wash hand basin.
- The nappy changing area has a nappy changing unit, steps, a wash hand basin, storage space for children's belongings and a foot operated pedalled bin for the disposal of nappies.
- The children in nappies were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Refrigerators were provided for the storage of perishable foods.
- It was advised that presently no child is on powdered infant formula. The staff advised that if a child required powdered infant formula, it would be made up by the parents and guardians and stored in the refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- The staff advised that the suncreams are supplied by parents and guardians, stored in the service and the dates of expiry are checked on a regular basis.
- On discussion with staff in the pre-school rooms staff informed the inspector of two children with allergies or intolerances. Detailed care plans were in place for these children
- The staff were aware of the instructions and storage requirements of the medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness. On the day of the inspection at 14:00hrs ten children were observed sleeping in the sleep room. Six children were sleeping in cots and four children were sleeping on a stackable bed. The older children had a relaxation, chill out area in their playrooms.

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- There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements, as per the 'safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy'.
- Sleep records were kept for each child's sleep, recording the time a staff physically checks the child. Additionally, the records included a sleeping child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the room
- A digital thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in labelled baskets.

Fire Safety:

- A fire evacuation plan was displayed on the walls in each of the playrooms.
- All exits remained free from obstruction on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In the Caterpillar room, there were soft matting with evidence of being frayed and torn thereby preventing effective cleaning.
2. The foot operated pedal bins in the Gingerbread room and the sanitary area were broken and required replacement.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise

1. Soft matting has been replaced, and these will be checked on a weekly basis
2. The foot operated pedal bins have been replaced in the Gingerbread room and the sanitary accommodation and these will be checked on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the replaced matting in the Caterpillar room and the replaced bins in the Gingerbread room and the sanitary accommodation.

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Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the non-compliances under regulation 23

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The service provided evidence that there were six staff trained in first aid for children available to the children, attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) There were two first aid boxes on the premises with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position on the ground floor and first floor of the premises.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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 firefighting 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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated 24th of March 2026

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(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 28th of May 2025. The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 17th of February 2026.

(4) Notices were displayed within the pre-school rooms of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27th March 2027 was for a full day care, catering for 85 children. The insurance covered the following,

- Public liability,
- Personal accident,
- Insurance against fire and theft,
- Buildings,
- Outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

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

(a) The service was maintained in an appropriate and adequate state of repair.

(b) The entrance into the service and the outdoor play areas were adequately secured to prevent a child exiting and an unauthorised person entering the premises.

(c) The playrooms were adequately lit, ventilated, and heated.

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(e)The sanitary facilities were adequate for the needs and requirements of the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The wall mounted heater in the Gingerbread room was leaking water and required repair or replacement.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d)The registered provider submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise that the faulty heater and shirting board has been replaced, and this will be checked on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the replaced heater and shirting board.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector has assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the non-compliance under Regulation 29.