

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO067
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Name of Service:	Tubbercurry Family & Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Mountain Road, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 YR25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brendan McCauley
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello and M Farrell.
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Tubbercurry Family and Childcare Centre is a community-based service which has been in operation since 2003. It is located near the town centre of Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo. Full day, part time and sessional care for children from infants to six years of age is offered. The maximum number of preschool children presently catered for is 88 as per the national register, ranging in age from 1 to 6 years. School aged children are catered for also. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00 hours. The facility is located on the ground floor of a two-storey building which is the Family Resource Centre. The pre-school is only accessible via a secure door and is not accessed by people from the rest of the building. There are five care rooms in operation, two dedicated sleep rooms and a large outdoor area

Staffing

On the day of the inspection, 17 adults were present in the service working within the preschool service. 15 adults worked directly with the children. There was one adult working in the kitchen and the person in charge. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The 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)

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

(1)(b)

The person in charge and deputy person were available throughout the inspection. On a review of staff attendance, the person in charge or the deputy person in charge was available throughout the operating hours of the service.

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(1)(c)

On discussion with the adults in the service they were aware of their roles and responsibilities with room leaders, childcare workers and lines of authority within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that three new adults had been employed since the previous inspection.

Two adults in the service are on a Community Employment (C.E.) scheme. On the day of inspection one student was present on an educational work placement.

A total of 3 files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 13 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Six written and verified past employer references or references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all three adults new to the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 24 adults in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(d)

The required international police vetting was available on file for two adults that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as adults.

(3)

The vetting procedures required had been carried out prior to an adult having direct access to a preschool child.

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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.

(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)

There were 15 adults working directly with 65 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation. One adult student was also present in one of the care rooms.

(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': 7 children between 1 year to 2 years of age were cared for by 2 adults.
- 'Toddler Room': 12 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age were cared for by 3 adults.

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- 'Preschool Room': 16 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age were cared for by 4 adults.
- 'Junior Preschool': 15 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age were cared for by 3 adults.
- 'Senior Preschool': 15 children aged from 4 to 5 years were being cared for by 3 adults.

In the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- Wobbler Room': 5 children between 1 year to 2 years of age were cared for by 2 adults.
- 'Toddler Room': 9 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age were cared for by 2 adults.
- 'Preschool Room': 15 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age were cared for by 2 adults.
- 'Junior Preschool: Closed
- Senior Preschool: Closed.

(8)(a)

The person in charge demonstrated by way of roster and attendance records that two adults are on the premises during operating hours.

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-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service operated out of five care rooms each room set up to meet the needs of the age and stage of the children utilising the rooms.

Senior Preschool:

The senior preschool is an open space with large windows providing light and ventilation to the room. The room is laid out into various interest areas to support the development of the older preschool child. Opportunities for various forms of play are available. Imaginary and role play is provided with home corners, construction areas,

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dolls, dress up and various popular toys. Sensory play is supported with tuff trays equipped with eggs and rice supporting an easter theme. Opportunities for creativity are provided through arts and crafts, and evidence of artwork is displayed on the walls of the care room. Language development is supported with an extensive library and circle time.

Resources are stored on low level shelving where children can choose activities. A fully stocked storeroom provides a rotation of toys and resources.

Junior Preschool:

The junior preschool room is equipped with a variety of resources and equipment to meet the needs of children aged 3 to 4 years of age that utilise this room daily. The room is set up to allow for free movement between interest areas. All equipment is stored in baskets on low level shelving allowing children to choose play activities. Interest areas include home areas and kitchen, dress up. Small world items, Baskets of dolls, soft toys, cars and building blocks. A fine motor area is equipped with magnets, suckers and pin boards for development and coordination. Storage facilities are equipped with extra resources, arts and crafts, books to allow for rotation and introduction of new resources in line with curriculum planning.

Preschool Fulltime playroom:

The preschool fulltime playroom catered for children aged from three to four years and was set up in defined interest areas with toys and play equipment stored at low levels allowing children to access them easily. Toy storage containers were labelled with photographs of the toys they contained. There was a wide selection of toys and play items. These included a kitchen area with toy utensils, tool bench with toy tools and hard hats, transport toys, dolls with clothes and tabletop activities including age-appropriate jigsaw puzzles, plastic bricks and wooden blocks. Dress up outfits for the children to wear were displayed hanging up with mirrors beside them for children to look at themselves in. The playroom had an art area with range of art and craft materials. Opportunities for the children to engage in messy play were available in the Preschool Fulltime playroom. These included a large Easter themed activity tray with coloured rice and small toy chicks and eggs. Playdough was also available with cutters and staff were observed to set up a group activity with the playdough for the children during the inspection. there was a selection of age-appropriate books, one of which was read to the children in a group during the inspection.

Toddler playroom

The Toddler playroom was laid out with similar easily accessible toys and play equipment to the Preschool Fulltime playroom in defined interest areas including home corner, transport toys, dress up clothes and a work bench. The children attending the Toddler playroom were aged from two to three years of age and toys and play items were suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them on the day. The playroom

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had activity tables, with covers, for messy play and one was set up for water play during the inspection. The playroom had a large playhouse for imaginary play that was large enough for children to sit in on the soft seating provided in it. Art and craft supplies and age appropriate books were also available in the Toddler playroom.

Wobbler playroom

The children in the Wobbler playroom had access to a selection of different toys and play equipment that were rotated with a large supply of equipment stored in a store area accessible directly from the playroom. Highchairs were also stored in this storage area when not in use. The toys in use during the inspection were suitable for the age range of the children attending the playroom which was between one to two years of age. Similar to the other playrooms, the toys and play items were stored in open storage systems with easy access for the children and included activity toys, baby dolls with a bunk-bed and a small age-appropriate kitchen with accessories. There was a selection of transport toys and insert jigsaw puzzles and the children had access to small hardback and soft washable books appropriate for their age range. Art supplies were available but stored out of reach and used regularly with the children according to the staff members.

Outdoor Courtyard:

The courtyard offers a safe outdoor space with climbing frames, rocking horses, bikes and trikes to provide children with an alternative form of play. Parts of the courtyard are sheltered to ensure outdoor play is facilitated in inclement weather.

Side Outdoor area:

The outdoor area to the right of the building is secured by high level mesh fencing and wooden gates. This area has a ground surface of grass and is equipped with a variety of resources for gross motor skill development. Resources include mud kitchens, tees, tyres for climbing, balance beams and wooden cars. Extra resources of bikes, trikes and footballs are available for outdoor play.

(1)(b)

The care rooms are equipped with suitable rest areas in the form of soft matting, child sofas and bean bags. These areas provide opportunities for rest and relaxation.

There were two sleep rooms available for the younger children with standard cots and stackable beds provided depending on the age and developmental stages of the children.

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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 entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised. All staff members have their own unique code to approve entry.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The equipment and materials in use on the day were well maintained and free from hazards. Cleaning schedules were available and up to date.
- Records demonstrated that a risk assessment was carried out by staff prior to the use of the outdoor play area.
- A section of the outdoor area was fenced off due to construction work. Risk assessments were in place to ensure that children did not have access to this area.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for effective hand hygiene.
- Children were observed to wash hands prior to snack times, after using the bathroom and messy play.
- Children were prompted in cough etiquette.
- Tables were cleaned after play and prior to snack times.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored appropriately in a locked cabinet, labelled correctly with child's name and requirements.
- On discussion with staff members, they were knowledgeable about the service policy on administration of medication.

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Safe Sleep:

- Standard cots with mattresses with waterproof coverings were provided in the sleep rooms for the younger children to sleep on.
- Both of the sleep room air temperatures were recorded between 18-22 °C within the required range for children aged over one year.
- The staff observed the sleeping children at least every 10 minutes and recorded their colour, breathing patterns and positions.

Fire Safety:

- Evacuation routes were clear from obstruction.
- Risk assessments were in place and new evacuation routes were in place where one area is inaccessible due to construction work. The service has ensured that children are familiar with new evacuation routes by regular evacuation drills.

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 person in charge ensured that there was a person trained in first aid for children available to the preschool children at all times. This was evidenced by certification of first aid responder training for three staff members. The person in charge confirmed that all other staff members are trained in paediatric first aid.

(2)(a)(b)

The service demonstrated that fully stocked first aid boxes with adequate resources were available in all rooms within the 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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 person in charge demonstrated that monthly fire evacuation drills occur in the service. The most recent one on the 23 March 2026.

(1)(b)

Evidence of the number and type of fire fighting and smoke detection system was provided with the annual maintenance test dated the 17 February 2026.

(2)(c)

These records were made available on the day to the inspector.

(3)

The person in charge is aware of the regulatory requirement to maintain these records for a period of five years after their creation.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedure and escape routes were clearly displayed in the service. The person in charge had taken measures to review escape routes with recent construction works to ensure safety.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be supervised at all times. There was a sufficient number of qualified adults in the service to provide care and support to the preschool children attending the service.

Meal times were observed to be supervised by the adults sitting alongside children, prompting and encouraging and offering support if required. The adults in the service were familiar with the needs of the children and strategically and discretely sat beside those children who may require additional support.

As children played both indoors and outdoors the adults ensured that all children were in view, while allowing space for the children to be independent.

One adult stayed in the Toddler sleep room with the children when resting/sleeping on stackable beds to observe them in line with requirements. The younger children sleeping in the sleep room adjacent to the Baby care-room were within earshot of the staff and checked by sight at least every 10 minutes.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service provided adequate certification of insurance for a full day care service up until the 1 March 2027.