

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY003
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Name of Service:	ABC Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Friar Street, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 CV07
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Name of Registered Provider:	Norah Commins
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	18/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years. A registered school age care service is also provided. The service operates Monday to Friday, 07:30 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children which operates Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 12:00 for 38 weeks of the year. The service is operated from a two-storey, mid-terrace premises in the town of Thurles in Co Tipperary. This former business and residential premises were converted for use as a childcare facility. The early years service consists of four activity rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas. This is one of two sister services in the Thurles area.

Staffing

There is a total of 21 staff including the registered provider and an administration staff working in the service. There were also two students present on the day of inspection. The registered provider works directly in the service. Staff working directly with pre-school children held qualifications in Early Childhood Education at level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,
Regulation 10 Policies and procedures,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,
Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) (3)(c) Records in relation to a pre-school child,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First aid
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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, 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

(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 a named deputy who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) A person in charge was present on the day of inspection. A person in charge was present daily.

(2) Twenty-three files including the registered provider, administration staff and two students were reviewed on the day:

2(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 21 staff members and the 2 students. In the case of one staff member, 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.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working with pre-school children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The inspectors reviewed 21 staff files and 2 student files. While it is acknowledged that two validated references were available for 15 staff members, there were no references available for 5 staff members. There was only one validated reference available for 1 staff member.

(2)(d) While out of state police vetting was available for three staff members, police vetting was not available for three other staff members this posed a possible risk to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two references were provided for five staff members. One reference was got for one staff member. Out of state police vetting was applied for three staff members and confirmation of same was sent to the Early Years Inspector.

Going forward all pre-employment documentation will be received and filed prior to commencement of employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

References for six staff members were sent to the Early Years inspector. All three police vetting disclosures have been received.

Summary Comment

Corrective actions have been accepted and will be assessed in practice on next inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

The following policies were assessed for compliance and were deemed to meet the necessary requirements:

- Statement of purpose and function.
- Policy on administration of medication.
- Policy on infection control.
- Policy on managing behaviour.
- Policy on safe sleep.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children.

(2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection met the requirements of the regulations as follows:

- Little Lobsters: 9 children cared for by 3 staff members.
- Little Treasures: 7 children cared for by 2 staff members.
- Little Einstein's 2: 6 children cared for by 2 staff members.
- Little Einstein's 1: 9 children cared for by 4 staff members.
- Little Acorns (ECCE): 10 children cared for by 2 staff members.
- Early Explorers (ECCE): 13 children cared for by 2 staff members.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*

(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;

(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A sample of 12 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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 to the premises was locked and needed to be opened from the inside. Staff were required to grant access to the preschool area; therefore, children could not exit the service unsupervised and unsupervised visitors could not enter. The outdoor play areas were secured to prevent children leaving. There was soft fall matting under the climbing equipment and slide in outdoor area. Radiator covers were present to prevent injury to children. Pinch guards covered the hinges were also present to prevent injury to children. Cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to children.

Infection control:

There were designated children's toilets available. Designated staff toilets were also provided. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with hand drying equipment and liquid soap. Nappy changing areas had disposable gloves and aprons available. Hand washing facilities were available in the nappy changing areas.

Mechanical ventilation was present on the sanitary facilities. Hand sanitizer was available in the service. Pedal bins were in operation to avoid cross contamination. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication to children while attending the service. Medication books were available in each room with details of any medication to be given with signed parental consent and details of the administration of medication by the staff.

Safe sleep:

There was a designated sleep room in the premises for children to sleep during their attendance. The service had a safe sleep policy. Children were monitored while they slept, and physical checks were carried out at 10-minute intervals. These checks were recorded on individual sleep records for each child.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.
There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within the service.
Firefighting equipment was present in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every three years. Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, one Garda vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting

Infection Control:

2. The mattresses in four cots were not wipeable or covered with a wipeable mattress cover which posed as risk of cross contamination.
3. A play matt on the floor of Little Einstein’s 1 was visibly stained which posed as risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for one staff member has been renewed.

Infection Control:

2. Waterproof mattresses protectors have been placed on the cots. Waterproof/wipeable mattresses have been ordered for the cots.
3. Play matt has been removed and disposed of.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copy of the renewed Garda vetting has been received by the Early Years Inspector.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence has been received by the Early Years Inspector. A copy of the invoice for the waterproof/wipeable mattresses was also received.
3. Photographic evidence has been received by the Early Years Inspector.

Summary Comment

Corrective actions have been accepted and will be assessed in practice on 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

(1) There were staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date certificate was in place to demonstrate that the service was insured to provide full day care for the number of children the service is registered to accommodate.