

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY051
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Name of Service:	Nenagh Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Limerick Rd., Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45 X744
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Name of Registered Provider:	Micheal McNulty
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	68	PM	50
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney & A McNamara
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Nenagh Childcare Centre, a community run full day care service, was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old. A registered school aged service is also provided on the premises. The service operates Monday to Friday, 07:30 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. A three-hour sessional service funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children operates Monday – Friday, 09:15 to 12:15 for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from purpose built, detached, single-storey premises in the town of Nenagh in Co Tipperary. The main building consists of five activity rooms, two sleep rooms, sleep alcove, sanitary accommodation areas, reception area, offices, staff room, kitchen and utility room. There is also a separate modular building on the site which is used by early years children in the morning and school aged children in the afternoon. The grounds at the back and side of the premises are developed into six separate outdoor play areas.

Staffing

The registered provider is the chairman of the board and does not work in the service. The service manager is the person in charge daily. There are 51 staff employed in the service which includes managerial staff, administration staff, maintenance staff, catering staff and staff who work directly with the children. There were 27 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection including staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and staff employed under a Community Employment Scheme (CES). CES staff who work with the children and do not already hold a childcare qualification are engaged in studies towards a qualification in early childhood care and education.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(a), 23 and 25(1)(2).

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child.

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.

(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) The service has a designated person in charge and a named deputy person in charge.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection. The designated person in charge or a named deputy were present in the service while it was in operation.

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that of the 51 staff employed in the service, 11 staff members had been employed since the previous inspection in January 2024. The staff files for 11 new staff were reviewed on the day. Garda vetting documentation was reviewed in respect of all 51 members of staff and the registered provider.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for the registered provider and 51 staff members working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting documentation was available for four of the staff who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

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

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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(2) The person in charge ensured that the adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the day of inspection.

Additional staff present in the rooms but who did not hold recognised qualifications were not included in the adult to child ratios.

AM: There were 19 staff working with 68 children in the morning as follows:

- Babies: 7 months to 16 months: 7 babies and 2 staff
- Butterflies: 13 months to 2 ½ years: 12 children and 2 staff
- Bumbles Bees: 2 years 3 months to 2 years 7 months: 13 children and 3 staff
- Ladybirds: 2 years 8 months to 4 years: 15 children and 4 staff
- Worms (ECCE): 3 years to 5 years: 13 children and 3 staff

- Grasshoppers (ECCE): 3 years to 5 years: 18 children and 4 staff

PM: The number of children had reduced by 2pm to 50 being supervised by 14 staff.

- Babies: 7 months to 16months: 6 babies and 2 staff
- Butterflies: 13months to 2 ½ years: 10 children and 2 staff
- Bumbles Bees: 2 years 3 months to 2 years 7 months: 12 children and 3 staff
- Ladybirds: 2 years 8 months to 4 years: 14 children and 3 staff
- Grasshoppers (ECCE): 3 years to 5 years: 18 children and 4 staff

(8)(a) Documentary evidence indicated that there were always at least two adults on the premises while children were in attendance.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 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) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The information required under parts (a) to (k) of this regulation were available on the premises in a variety of formats including paper based and electronic records.

(3) The required records were available on the premises and open to inspection by an authorised person.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service.

Basic needs:

The available space within the care rooms supported the children to explore their environment and to freely engage with materials. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities. Each room had direct access to the outdoors. The children were observed on the morning of inspection to play outside in nature for long periods. Staff reported that the children play outside daily. Wetsuits and wellingtons belonging to the children were kept in the service. Covered areas were available to the children in the outdoor area.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Each child had their own drinking cup or bottle that was refilled with water as required. All snacks and meals were prepared onsite by the service chef. A weekly menu plan was available. Meals and snacks were served at regular times each day. The service provided the children with a hot meal in the middle of the day. Formula milk for babies was supplied by parents.

Toilets and nappy changing areas were directly accessible from each care room which supported the children to use the toilets independently when they needed to. Nappy changing was carried out at regular times throughout the day and when required.

Children could rest and relax in the cosy areas in each room. Sleep facilities were available for the children who required a sleep during the day. Cots were available in the sleep room for the babies. The sleep rooms were

sufficiently dark and quiet to promote a restful sleep. Low-level floor beds were available to meet the sleep needs of children over 2 years of age.

Physical and material environment:

In each of the care rooms, a variety of defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play with. These included a construction area, kitchen area, reading area, and craft area. Labelled low-level shelving provided children with access to a wide selection of activities suitable for the age and stage of the children. Adequate space was available for children to engage in both floor and table play independently and in groups. Children in the preschool rooms were observed to engage in making modelling clay, sensory play and a range of activities. Pictograms timetables were used in each room and displayed at the children's eye level so that they could see what was happening next. The environment was inclusive and representative of the children attending the service, with world flags displayed on the walls. Inspectors observed the use of different languages for some words with the children in the pre-school room. Languages other than English were used to promote diversity and the inclusion of multilingual children. Staff had helped the children create areas of familiarity in the care room to promote each child's identity and belonging such as a birthday wall. The children's artwork was displayed on the walls of the service. The outdoor play area to the rear of the premise was divided into a designated play spaces. These consisted of grass and soft fall spaces which housed a pirate ship, slide, mud kitchen, ride on toys, and a shed for storage of resources. Children used the outdoor space daily, and they rotated between the different areas.

Supporting relationships:

The children benefitted from favourable adult to child ratios which enabled each child to receive as much individual attention and support as they needed. Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and a positive regard. The staff sat with the children, at the tables, on the floor or in the cosy/reading areas, assisting the children as required, engaging them in conversation and being available to them. Staff also engaged in play in the outdoor areas. Staff met with the children's parents at arrival and departure times, when they could share information about their child. The service used an electronic application designed for use in early years services to take photos of the children and record their daily activities, which could then be viewed by the parents when they logged into the app.

Staff managed transition times such as the move from outdoor to indoor play in a way that created a calm environment in which the children's needs were met. For example, the children from Ladybird's room were

brought inside in small groups by two staff while two staff remained outside with the other children. This allowed space and time for children to change out of outdoor clothing and footwear, wash their hands and use the toilet, supervised and assisted by staff as needed, before the next group came in.

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 premises was adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access. The entrance door to the service had to be opened by a staff member. The inspectors were required to sign in on arrival. The outdoor play areas were secured to prevent children leaving. Pinch guards covered the hinges on all doors to prevent injury to children. All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to children. All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. There was soft fall matting present in the playground. The kitchen area was inaccessible.

Infection control:

The service was clean and well maintained. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. There were designated children's toilets available to the children. Designated staff toilets were also provided. Handwashing reminders and steps were present in the sanitary accommodation. There were also sinks present in the care rooms and nappy changing areas. There was both natural and mechanical ventilation present in the toilets and nappy changing areas. The nappy changing area was clean. There were gloves and aprons available to the staff. Nappy changing procedures were displayed on the walls of the nappy changing rooms. Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after using the toilet and after messy play. A tissue station was available to the children both indoors and outdoors. Cots and low-level beds were spaced the required 50cm apart, there was a system in place to launder bed linen. Pedal bins were in operation to avoid cross contamination. Perishable foods and babies' bottles were stored in a fridge.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being given to a child. A record was maintained of all medications administered to children while attending the service. Medications were stored out of reach of children in their original containers.

Safe sleep:

There were two designated sleep rooms and a sleep alcove in the premises for children to sleep during their attendance in the service.

Standard cots were provided for the babies and toddlers who required naps during their time spent in the service. Staff recorded the temperature of the sleep rooms each time that they carried out the sleeping children's physical checks of colour, position and breathing every 10 minutes, recording the findings on individual children's sleep records, in line with the service's safe sleep policy.

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.

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 as First Aid Responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in easily accessible positions in each care room.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to the children attending the service.