

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY070
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Name of Service:	Sunnyside Day Care
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Address of Service:	225/226, Rosemount, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 E2H6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brendan Shanahan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	42
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney and A McNamara
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

This full day care service was established in 2013 to provide care and education to children aged between 0 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday to Friday, 7.45am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children which operates 9am to 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from the ground floor of a detached, two-storey premises in a residential housing estate in the town of Thurles in north Tipperary. The service consists of four activity rooms, a sleep room, sanitary accommodation areas for children and staff, kitchen and outdoor play area.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service but is responsible for the maintenance of the premises. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are eight staff, including the manager, employed in the service to work directly with the children. Staff hold recognised qualifications 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(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(8), 15, 23, 26 and 29.

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

(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

The staff files of the two new members of staff and most recent Garda vetting documents for all staff were assessed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of both members of staff.

(b) A written, validated reference from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of one member of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were kept on file. Re-vetting of staff was carried out on a three-yearly basis in line with the requirements of TULSA.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the staff for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) A second written reference was not available in respect of one member of staff.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The missing second written reference for the staff member has been obtained and added to their personnel file. The personnel file has been reviewed in its entirety to confirm that all other staff files contain the required references and supporting documentation.

To prevent recurrence, all future staff recruitment files will be checked before a new employee starts, ensuring that both written references are on file. The manager will double-check references at the point of recruitment and confirm completion in writing.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the second reference was received via email by the offices of the early years inspectorate on 12 November 2025.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) There were 7 staff working directly with 43 children aged between 14 months and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. By 12pm, the number of children had reduced to 42, who were cared for by 7 staff. The number of children and staff in each room in the morning was as follows:

Baby room: 3 staff with 13 children aged between 14 months and 2.5 years old.

Toddler room: 2 staff with 10 children aged between 2.5 and 3 years old.

ECCE room 1: 1 staff and 9 children aged between 3 and 4 years old

ECCE room 2: 1 staff and 11 children aged between 4 and 5 years old.

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children for much of the period of the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the minimum recommendations at times when all seven staff were present in the rooms or in the outdoor area with all of the children from their rooms.

(8)(a) There were at least two members of staff present in the service when it was in operation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There were inadequate numbers of staff available at times when a member of staff needed to be absent from the room for activities such as nappy changing. There were 21 children present on the day of inspection who required nappy changing, on average, three times per day. These children were in the Baby room and Toddler room, which meant that there were inadequate staff working directly with the rest of the children in those rooms when staff left the room with one child to carry out nappy changing. There were no additional staff available to cover in the rooms during these times and for other activities which took staff out of the room such as sleep checks and preparation for activities.

It is acknowledged that a member of staff was scheduled to arrive for the afternoon, which would allow staff to take their lunch break.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

To ensure adequate staff supervision and maintain required ratios at all times, the staff rota has been revised to include a designated floating staff member available during key periods such as nappy changing, sleep checks and activity preparation. This adjustment ensures that when a staff member leaves the room, sufficient staff remain to supervise the children. The revised rota was implemented with ratio compliance monitored and recorded daily by room leaders and reviewed weekly by management. Staff have been briefed on the updated procedures during team meetings to ensure full understanding and consistency. A review of the effectiveness of this change will take place by the 27th October, with records retained as evidence of continuous compliance.

To prevent reoccurrence of this non-compliance, the service has introduced a proactive staff deployment plan to ensure that adequate cover is consistently maintained throughout the day. Room leaders now complete daily supervision checks to monitor ratios in real time and a floating staff member is assigned during high-demand periods. The rota will be reviewed monthly by management to ensure ongoing suitability, with adjustments made as needed to reflect attendance patterns or room needs.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the staff rosters for the week ending 9 November 2025 were received via email by the offices of the early years inspectorate on 12 November 2025.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 size of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(1) The required information as detailed under parts (a) to (j) of this regulation was sought on each of the registration forms. Seven of the 10 forms had been fully completed by parents.

(3)(a) The completed registration forms were available on the premises and open for inspection by an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Three of the registration forms reviewed were incomplete and did not contain the following required information:

(h) Two of the forms did not contain a record of immunisations, if any, received by the children.

(i) One form did not contain written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All child registration forms have been reviewed to ensure they are fully completed and contain all required information, including immunisation records and written parental consent for emergency medical treatment. The three incomplete forms identified during inspection were immediately updated following consultation with parents and all other forms have since been audited for accuracy and completeness. Each staff member was reminded to review each new registration form when enrolling children to ensure no required section is left blank. The manager will carry out monthly spot checks to verify ongoing compliance.

To prevent reoccurrence, a formal enrolment procedure has been implemented, requiring a second staff member to review all new registration forms before acceptance. Staff responsible for admissions have been reminded of the importance of obtaining full medical and consent details. A quarterly audit of all child records will be completed by management to ensure ongoing compliance and early identification of any gaps.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of the completed registration forms were received and reviewed by the early years inspector on 15 October 2025.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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:

Staff, children and visitors entered the premises through the front door into a lobby. The sign-in books for the children, staff and visitors were located on a low table in the lobby. There was a glass panel door and partition wall between the lobby and the service which was locked by an electronic locking system that could be opened by a keypad from the outside or a door release button from the inside. There was a call bell system to alert staff

when someone was seeking entry to the service. Staff were responsible for answering the door and monitoring entry to and exit from the service, ensuring that children could not exit the service unsupervised and unauthorised visitors could not enter.

The outdoor play area was located at the back of the premises and was enclosed by a concrete wall. There was a passageway at either side of the premises, secured by gates at the front and back to prevent unauthorised access to the outdoor area and to prevent the children from leaving the outdoor area without supervision.

Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection control:

Staff were observed wiping down the tables before and after the children sat down at them to eat.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Written parental consent was sought to allow staff to administer medication to a child when required.

Safe sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Sleeping children were checked every 10 minutes and a written record was maintained of same.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

1. Children's hands were not consistently washed after toileting or before snack time. The inspectors observed the procedure during the day and did not see handwashing take place for these children.
2. Mattresses/ mattress covers on cots were not waterproof and therefore could not be adequately cleaned which posed a risk of cross contamination.
3. Foot operated pedal bins were not available in all rooms of the service for the hygienic disposal of rubbish.
4. Perishable foods brought to the service were not stored in a fridge.
5. Toilet roll holders or dispensers were not available in the children's sanitary areas so the toilet rolls were left loose, sitting on the lid of the cistern. This posed a risk for cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

1. Immediate steps were taken to strengthen infection control procedures across the service. Staff were reminded on proper handwashing practices for children, ensuring hands are washed after toileting, before

meals and after outdoor play. Visual prompts and handwashing posters have been placed at all sinks to reinforce consistency.

2. New cots were purchased and new mattress protectors and sheets were purchased for each individual child.
3. Foot-operated pedal bins have been installed in every room for hygienic waste disposal.
4. All staff were reminded to keep perishable foods brought from home in the fridge.
5. Toilet roll holders have been fitted in all children's bathrooms to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

These actions were fully implemented and daily checks are now conducted by room leaders to verify adherence to hygiene standards.

To ensure sustained compliance with infection control standards, infection control has been embedded into the daily routine and supervision practices of each room. Room leaders are reminded to complete the daily hygiene and cleaning checklist, confirming that all handwashing routines, cleaning procedures and food storage requirements have been followed. A designated infection control person has been appointed to oversee consistency and act as a point of contact for staff queries or concerns. Infection control topics are now included as a standing item at staff meetings/discussions to encourage continuous awareness and improvement.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

Photos of the wall-mounted hand washing posters, new pedal bins and new cots were received and reviewed by the early years inspector on 15 October 2025.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 23 May 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment had an annual service in September 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) There was no evidence of the smoke alarm system being serviced annually. It is acknowledged that the battery had been replaced in the control panel for the smoke alarm system since the last inspection, in August 2024, and that the power light was on.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(b) We are currently waiting on an electrician to carry out the servicing of the smoke alarm system.

Summary Comment

This non-compliance remains outstanding until such time as the smoke alarm system is serviced.

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 premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure.

(b) The premises appeared to be safe and secure. See compliance information under regulation 23.

(c) The premises was lit and ventilated by natural lighting and outside air through windows in external walls in the four activity rooms, sleep room and kitchen, supplemented by artificial lighting when required. Blackout blinds, with secured cords, were used in the sleep room to shade the windows when children were sleeping. Sanitary accommodation areas for staff and children were lit and ventilated by mechanical means as these were internal rooms. The inspection was carried out during the summer months when central heating was not required. There was an oil-fired central heating system to heat the service in the colder months.

(d) The service had some refurbishment works carried out since the last inspection on 7 August 2024. New linoleum flooring had been laid in the corridor, children's sanitary accommodation areas, ECCE room 1 and the Toddler room.

Some of the areas identified in the previous report as requiring repair, such as the trickle vent in the Toddler room, had been repaired. The area of mould in the baby room had been treated and painted and painting had been done of internal walls and wooden furniture. The wall mounted radiators throughout the service had been replaced as some of the older ones had been rusty.

(e) The children's sanitary accommodation areas had been refurbished and rearranged since the last inspection. There was one toilet, a nappy changing unit, set of steps and a wash hand basin in one sanitary accommodation area and two toilets and wash hand basins in the second sanitary accommodation area. This was sufficient sanitary accommodation for up to 33 toilet trained children and up to 11 children who require nappy changing.

There was a separate sanitary accommodation area for staff with a toilet and wash hand basin, which was sufficient for up to 8 staff.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The following non-compliances were identified on the day of inspection:

1. One of the cots in the sleep room appeared to be broken: the side near the wall was loose and was deemed to be potentially dangerous to use. The wall behind this cot had a stain from a liquid spill which had run down the side of the cot and the adjacent storage unit. There was dirt sticking to all the surfaces the liquid had spilled on. The inspectors moved the storage unit to get a better look at the cots and the extent of the soiling and found dust and cobwebs on the floor under the cot and storage unit. There was no evidence that these surfaces had been cleaned recently.

Two cots in the sleep room had marks and indentations along the top rail, there also appeared to be stains in the wood from being used and handled. The mattress covers and the sheets were stained.

It is acknowledged that following the inspection the service manager ordered five new cots, ten mattress protectors and ten cot sheets for the room and sent a copy of the invoice to the inspectors as proof of purchase.

2. The top of the nappy changing unit not covered by the changing mat was covered in what appeared to be heavy dust or loose soil. There was no evidence that this part of the changing unit was cleaned when the changing mat was wiped down after each use though the cleaning record sheets on the wall of the sanitary accommodation area were signed to say that the space had been cleaned.

3. The outdoor area appeared unkempt. There were large patches of bare earth where the grass had worn away and the grass that remained needed to be cut. There was a large, partially broken concrete base in one part of the outdoor area, the remains of the greenhouse which had been in this area on the last inspection. There were holes around the concrete, made by the children digging there, which posed a tripping hazard. The outdoor furniture and equipment would benefit from being cleaned and repainted.

4. The contact paper covering the windowsills in the Baby room was torn and peeling making these surfaces difficult to clean effectively. This issue was identified on the last inspection of the service in August 2024.

5. The removable, machine washable covers for the sofas in the Baby room and Toddler room were stained and required to be washed.

(e)
There were 13 children in the Baby room and 8 children in the Toddler room who required nappy changing. There were insufficient nappy changing facilities for this number of children. The recommended ratio being 1 nappy changing unit and wash hand basin for every 11 children in nappies. The service needed an additional nappy changing unit and wash hand basin to meet the requirements.

It is acknowledged that the service manager ordered a second nappy changing unit following the inspection and sent a copy of the order invoice to the inspectors as proof of purchase.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) Immediate actions were taken to address all identified issues.

1. Five new cots, ten mattress protectors, and ten cot sheets were purchased and installed to replace damaged or soiled cots and bedding in the sleep room.
2. The nappy changing unit top surfaces, previously neglected, were thoroughly cleaned, and a second nappy changing unit and wash hand basin were ordered to meet the recommended ratios for children requiring nappy changes.
3. The outdoor area was cleared of debris and the broken concrete base removed; grass areas were cut, and outdoor furniture and equipment were cleaned and will be repainted. We plan to cover the area with bark mulch or mill waste in the near future.
4. All removable, machine-washable sofa covers were laundered.
5. Torn contact paper on the Baby room windowsills was removed to allow effective cleaning. We plan to replace the windowsills with PVC ones.

Cleaning schedules were reviewed to ensure all surfaces, including under cots and storage units, are consistently cleaned and documented.

To prevent recurrence, the service has reviewed and held a meeting with staff to ensure they were using the comprehensive maintenance and cleaning schedule with daily, weekly and monthly tasks clearly assigned to staff and monitored by room leaders. Sleep room furniture and equipment will be inspected weekly for damage and any issues will be reported immediately to management for repair or replacement. Outdoor areas will be checked daily for hazards and annual maintenance of surfaces and furniture will be scheduled to maintain safe play environments. Cleaning logs have been revised to ensure all surfaces, including hidden and hard-to-reach areas,

are recorded as cleaned, and staff have received refresher training on hygiene, furniture safety and equipment care. Nappy changing ratios will be reviewed regularly and additional facilities will be provided as necessary to maintain compliance with recommended ratios.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of the renovated sleep room including five new cots and of the nappy changing units were received and reviewed by the early years inspector on 15 October 2025.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.