

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY127
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Name of Service:	Lullabies and Laughter
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Address of Service:	Aherlow Community Creche, Lisvernane, Glen of Aherlow, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E34 X932
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine Donovan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
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Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Lullabies and Laughter was established in 2009 to provide early learning and care to children aged 1 to 6 years old. The service offers full day, part time and sessional programmes, Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 18.00. A school age service is also provided. The premises is a purpose-built single storey detached building, with three early years rooms, sanitary accommodation, kitchen and staff areas. The outdoor area is divided into three spaces for use by each age group.

Staffing

The service currently employs 16 staff members, 15 of whom were working directly with children on the day of inspection. The manager works in an administrative capacity and an onsite chef is also employed. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Staff working directly with the children hold qualifications at Level 5, 6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Additional training has been undertaken by staff which included the Leadership for Inclusion in Early Years (LINC) programme and children first.

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 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,
Regulation 21 Equipment and materials
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire safety and
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, 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*

(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 designated person in charge who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.

The staff files for 15 staff were reviewed on the day.

(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 each staff member 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 two staff working in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were enough adults to respond to children’s individual needs. There were four staff directly working with eight children.

(2) At all times during the inspection the person in charge ensured that the adult to children ratio was maintained. The service exceeded the minimum child to adult ratio required under the regulation.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service consisted of several large care rooms. The equipment and materials reviewed on inspection were well maintained. Materials were accessible to the children on low level shelving. The service had personalised coat hooks for each child attending the service. The service had play resources available in the care room suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. There was clear interest areas developed within the room such as an imaginative play area, messy play area, kitchen, doll house and building blocks. There were art and craft materials available to the children. The children’s arts and crafts decorated the walls. The service had been completing Spring and Easter crafts. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as puzzles and eating at snack time. The service had designated secure outdoor areas for the

children. There were covered areas which the children also had access to. A wide range of materials such as astroturf, vision boards, slides, blackboard, outdoor kitchen, and benches were available in the outdoor area.

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 answer a call bell system to grant access to the preschool area. The outdoor play areas were secured also; therefore, children could not exit the service unsupervised and unsupervised visitors could not enter.

Pinch guards covered the hinges on all doors to prevent injury to children. All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to children. Blind cords were secured to the wall.

Infection control:

The service was clean and well maintained. The nappy changing area had hand washing facilities, gloves and aprons available for use. Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available in the children's and adult's sanitary facilities. This included warm running water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels. Hand washing reminders were displayed in the service.

Safe sleep:

There was a designated sleep room in the premises for children to sleep during their attendance in the service. Cots and floor beds were available to the children who required naps during their time spent in the service. The temperature of the sleep room was recorded as 17°C.

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 responder (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 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.*
- (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 record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 11th of March 2025 and staff advised that monthly fire drills were completed.
- (b) There was a record available demonstrating that the smoke alarm system was last serviced in December 2024 and the firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2024.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.