

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD001
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Name of Service:	Little Buddies Creche
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Address of Service:	5 Cross Roads, Portlaw, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 XYE9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alice Norris
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office, Cork Road, Waterford City X91 VX09
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Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Little Buddies is one of two child care services operated by the registered provider. This service is based in a renovated building in a rural setting outside the village of Portlaw. There are two large care rooms, a cot room, a kitchen, an office and sanitary areas. The older children are cared for on the first floor, and the younger children use the space on the ground floor. There is a large outdoor space at the side of the building with a partially covered outdoor room.

The service is registered to care for up to 41 pre-school children aged from 1 to 6 years of age. The hours of operation are from 08:00 to 18:00.

The service also offers school-age care.

Staffing

The service employs nine staff members, including the registered provider and the cook. On the day of the inspection, seven staff members were working directly with the pre-school children, and the registered provider was available if required. In addition, a student was on-site completing work experience.

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 – Management and Recruitment;
Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;
Regulation 15 – Record of Preschool Child;
Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service
Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;
Regulation 25 – First Aid;
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;
Regulation 28- Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child and 16(1)(h)(i)(k) Records 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 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
- (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.

(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)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. There was a clear management structure with the line management displayed in the service.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed 10 staff files, including the registered provider, the cook and the student.

(a)(b) Validated references were available for review.

(c) Garda vetting was available for 10 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Documents required to demonstrate whether two adults required police vetting were not available to the inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that all staff folders have been updated and the documentation demonstrated that staff did not require police vetting. A checklist has been developed to support management in ensuring that all relevant documents are received from new staff member going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the checklist was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 7 staff caring for 31 preschool children and 6 staff caring for 23 children in the afternoon. The person in charge was

available to offer support if required. The registered provider is not rostered to work directly with the children.
The service employs a cook.

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.*

Non-Compliance Information

A sample of 12 children's enrolment forms completed by the parents was reviewed as part of the inspection process and was found not to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation. For example, the missing details including:

- the date on which the children first attended the service,
- completed immunisation records for two children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that all forms have been updated and parents were requested, via text message, to submit up to date information regarding their child's vaccine records. Going forward spot checks will be carried out by management to ensure all forms are up to date with the required information.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documents were submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Information required under parts (a) to (i) were available on the day of the inspection

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (j) On the day of the inspection, there were three medication administration forms available for review; of these three, none were completed correctly, as identifying details of the children were not included on the forms. This creates a risk of identifying the correct child in case of an emergency.
- (k) Of the 10 accident and incident report forms reviewed, 8 were not completed fully, with children's identifying details not included on the forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that all staff have been informed of the requirement for children's complete identifying information to be included on all forms. Management will check the accident and incident records and the administration of medication forms to ensure the required details are included.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation as submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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)

There were two care rooms for the children, the Toddler room downstairs and the Preschool room upstairs. Each room was equipped with a wide variety of play materials, which were of good quality and suitable for the age and stage of development of the children. Open shelving allowed children to access toys and materials independently, and there was sufficient space for children to move around and play.

Toys and materials included kitchen/home corners, baskets of bricks, farm toys and dolls. The playrooms had personalised touches that included family photos, birthday walls, and individually named hooks for children to hang their coats and bags on. Throughout the rooms, Halloween activities were set up with a variety of books, dress up and arts and crafts.

The service had a designated outdoor play area for the children at the side of the premises. This area was fully enclosed. This had an all-weather surface. There was a partially covered outdoor area which allowed children more opportunities for outdoor play. There were mud kitchens, goal posts, balls, ride-on toys, and gutters placed on the fence for water play.

(b)

Each of the rooms had cosy/rest areas with sofas, soft mats, and these spaces were away from the main play areas if children needed a rest or a break from play. There was a designated sleep room with four cots, and at sleep time, a space in the Toddler area was set up with low beds.

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 registered provider has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. Seven staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard.

(2)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available to the staff and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position at the top of the stairs and at an exit.

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.
- (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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these was available on the day. The last fire drill was carried out on the 1st of September 2025.
 - (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarms. The maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on 1st of December 2024 and on the smoke alarms on 22nd of November 2024.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each of the care rooms and the exits.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured for up to 42 full-day care children.