

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD019
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Name of Service:	Co. Waterford Child Care Centre T/A Le Cheile
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Address of Service:	T/A Le Cheile, Mitchell Street, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X35 DE98
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eleanor McGrath
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	14/01/2026
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Date 2 of Inspection:	15/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	112	PM	49
Day 2	AM	118	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office Cork Road Waterford City
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw M. Bermingham
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Co Waterford Child Care Centre trading as Le Chéile is a community childcare service located in the grounds of the Presentation Community Development Centre in Dungarvan town, Co Waterford.

The service is purpose built and located on the ground floor with nine care rooms (of which one is not in use), a catering kitchen, and sanitary areas. There are separate storage rooms for prams and buggies, toys and equipment, and chemical cleaning agents. The outdoor play areas are adjacent to the childcare rooms.

The full-day care service is registered to open from Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 17:15 caring for up to 160 children from 0 to 6 years of age.

Staffing

Le Chéile is managed by a voluntary management committee. The service employs a general manager, a service coordinator, compliance officer, 33 childcare staff, and 5 auxiliary staff.

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;

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Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child;
Regulation 16 - Record in Relation to a Pre-school Service;
Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child;
Regulation 24 – Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance;
Regulation 25 – First Aid;
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child, regulation 16(1)(h) Records of a preschool child and regulation 24 - Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler room, the Cruisers room, Starfish room and the Dolphin's room.

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 registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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) The service operated with a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge or the named deputy was rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours of the service.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place, as evidenced by observing the operation of the service on the day of inspection and through discussion with staff.

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(2)

There was a total of 41 staff employed with the service as confirmed by the service management and verified through a review of the roster. The staff files were reviewed to evidence the following findings of regulatory requirement in relation to recruitment and vetting:

(a)(b) The registered provider had considered two references during the recruitment of all staff.

(c) Forty-one required vetting disclosures, from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána, were available. Thirty-nine out of 41 required disclosure renewals were available, in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory notice requiring 3-year Garda vetting renewals; further details are included in Regulation 23 below.

(d) Six of the required seven international police vetting certificates were available, in respect of those staff who lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4)

Thirty-three staff who were employed to work directly with children held the required qualification or recognised equivalent, as evidenced by the available records.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) One International police vetting certificate was not available in respect of one staff for whom it was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that police vetting was filed in the sister service as this employee had commenced work there and it is now placed in the service files too. They stated that they will ensure that if a staff member moves between the two services, they will retain a copy of all their details in each service. Staff files will be checked on a monthly basis and documented & signed off on by Management. They will use the Tusla check list to check all information is available for our Staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police vetting was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider are suitable to address the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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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 the children 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) There was an adequate number of staff always working directly with the children.
- (2) The required ratio of staff to children was met throughout the inspection. It was observed that on day one, 27 staff cared for 112 children throughout the morning, and 14 staff cared for 49 children in the afternoon. On day two, 28 staff were observed caring for 118 children.

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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 12 children records were reviewed and the details required in parts (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i) were included in these forms.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (h) Of the 12 records reviewed the immunisations details for children were not available on three forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that immunisation details have been received for all children and going forward no child will commence in the service without a copy of their vaccination records or a signed letter from the parent confirming that they do not wish to vaccinate their child. The registration forms have been edited to reflect this change going forward. They stated that at a staff meeting held on 19th January 2026 and staff were made aware to double check all children's files and to ensure that no file is accepted without it being completed in total. Children's files on receipt will also be double checked by the Co-Ordinator and Compliance Officer.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the edited registration form was submitted.

A copy of the staff minutes was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider are suitable to address 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;

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- (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) The details required from (a) to (k) was available to the inspector. The information was included in the staff files, the parental handbook, (which is emailed to each parent), and included in the attendance record book.

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.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
 - (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

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Compliance Information

- (1) (a)(b) The four playrooms sampled; the Wobbler, Cruisers, Dolphins, and Starfish rooms reflected the individual age and stage of development for the children using them. Low-level open shelving units were used throughout, so children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. Each room was well laid out and had interest areas that were thought out and resourced. There were home corners/kitchens, sand play, activity trays, dress up clothes, art materials, wooden and plastic blocks, birthday walls, family walls, dolls and car toys for the children. Staff in the Cruisers room described how they move equipment around depending on the needs and interest of the children. This was evident on the day of the inspection as space was made to allow more children to access the activity tray on the floor filled with oatmeal to 'feed the toy horses'. There was a broad range of open-ended play-based materials, natural materials, loose parts and sensory items offered. In the Starfish room, real life pots, pans, empty food and drink boxes, cartons, spray bottles, and cloths created a café scene and included menus and recipes. Children in the Wobbler room had a choice of wooden and plastic toys. The interactive, push pull toys were appropriate for the age and stage of the children in this room. In the Starfish and Dolphins room, sinks were available at children's level containing receptacles and aprons as an invitation to water play. In the Dolphins room, children were playing around an activity tray containing coloured rice with bowls and spoons, which the staff member commented was made available newly that morning. Children's literacy development was promoted with plenty of reading materials, photographs, signage and labelling throughout. Staff in the Wobbler, Dolphins and Starfish rooms were observed to encourage children to choose a book and as a group they were observed to sit on low mats engage in an interactive story. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display, at children's level, of works of art and personalised touches such as individual named hooks for their coats and bags. In the hallway of the Wobbler room a children's height chart with their photographs was displayed.
- (b) There were adequate and suitable facilities for children to rest during the day. In each of the care rooms, there were cosy areas containing child-size couches and mats for children to take a break away from the main play area, partake in circle-time or story reading. In the Dolphins room a child was observed resting in the cosy space. The service had two dedicated sleep rooms equipped with cots and low beds and suitable bedding. Staff were observed to follow the individual children's sleep and/or rest requirements during the day.

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(3) (a) Staff in the Cruisers room described how the children play outdoors every day if possible and children from the Dolphins and Starfish rooms were observed playing outside. There were four defined outdoor areas which were well designed and offered the children a variety of opportunities for physical activity and play. These areas had soft matting and artificial grass. There were planting boxes for gardening and digging with the shoots of the flowers planted last year just showing. Each area had a variety of wheeled toys for large physical play, sand/water tables equipped with receptacles for sensory play, and tubs with large stones, wooden blocks, and shells for open ended play. There were climbing frames with slides which encouraged movement and turn taking and a kitchen bench to support imaginary play.

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 external doors of the building were appropriately secured to prevent children exiting unsupervised and unauthorised person from gaining access.

Infection Control:

Warm water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were available for children and staff when washing their hands.

Each room had an up to date completed toy cleaning checklist; toys and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.

The service's nappy changing procedures were followed by staff members. Creams, wipes, and packets of nappies were all labelled for each individual child.

Cots and sleep mats were 50cm apart in both sleep rooms.

Safe Sleep:

Cots and beds were well maintained and labelled with children's names for individual use.

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Fire Safety:

Staff detailed the procedures for the monthly fire drills and showed the inspector where the assembly point was in the main car park.

Emergency exits were unobstructed and well signposted.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Current Garda vetting was not available for one staff member. Thus, the service was not compliant with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.
2. Staff personal belongings, including open handbags, were stored on a low windowsill and were accessible to the children. Staff handbags may contain hazardous items which could pose a risk to children and as such should be kept out of reach.
3. Cleaning products were stored on a low windowsill which was accessible to the children posing a risk of injury.
4. Children could access an unused area of the outdoor garden as the gate was broken and not closed on both days of inspection. This area housed the utility piping for the heating system which posed a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

5. Children's soothers in the Wobbler room were stored loosely in shared baskets and not in the individual containers as required by the service's sleep policy. This created a risk of cross infection.
6. The children's low couches in the Dolphin room and Starfish rooms were torn with the foam visible so could not be cleaned effectively thus posing a risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

7. On a review of the medication policy, and template forms in the children's registration folders there was no evidence in three instances of parents written consent for the administration of medication as per the service policy.

Sleep:

8. Two children, aged 2 years and 11 months and 2 years and 3 months were observed sleeping on low beds unsupervised in the Toddler sleep room at 13:45. Staff stated that they complete 10-minute checks on sleeping children. Sleeping children who are accommodated on floor beds must be fully supervised in in-room supervision in place.

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9. Adequate sleep checks and records were not maintained during the day. The service policy stated that each child's colour, positions and breathing would be checked every 10 minutes. However, sleep records on the day of the inspection only recorded the date, child's name and the time they were going for a sleep and times checked thereafter. The sleep room was too dark for staff to be able to monitor children's breathing and colour while sleeping. This created a risk of a child being unwell while sleeping, as the staff member's practice did not include physically checking the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider stated that:

1. Garda vetting has been received for this staff member and is on file. New staff will not commence in the service without up-to-date garda vetting.
2. Staff have been informed to store their personal belongings in the staff cloak room & lockers. All rooms have been given storage boxes with lids where they can store their coats if they wish. Daily checks will be carried out to ensure that personal belongings are not being stored in the care rooms.
3. Staff were given written notice reminding them again to store all cleaning products on the upper shelves provided in the classrooms and out of reach of children.
4. The gate has been replaced, and all gates have been fitted with combination locks. New fencing & gates have been ordered for the garden area. There will be a daily walk through of both internal & external areas and this will be recorded and signed.

Infection Control:

The registered provider stated that:

5. All children have individual baskets, clearly labelled and all soothers have their own containers again clearly labelled.
 6. The Dolphin couch had a pencil hole which was taped. A cover has since been sourced and is now in place on this couch. A new couch has been purchased for the Starfish room. Also, a temporary cover has been placed over the Star Fish couch.
- Staff will be monitoring all of their room contents and if there is a defect they will inform management immediately, who will in turn have these items repaired or replaced.

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Administration of Medication:

The registered provider stated that:

7. Medication parental consent was recorded in a daily logbook in our office when over the phone permissions was granted. Management always rings for parental consent to double check that the child has not already received medication prior to their child attending our service that morning. Parental consent is also recorded on the child's registration form when commencing in our facility. Going forward, the service will be using the Tusla sample medication form and completing it in detail for each individual child. The compliance officer will be checking and filing all these forms on a weekly basis and recording & signed record of these checks.

Safe Sleep:

The registered provider stated that:

8. The sleep room records have been edited to reflect 10-minute sleep checks & physical checks.
9. The floor beds have been replaced with cots and floor beds will no longer be in use in sleep rooms. The lighting will be improved to allow for ambient lighting facilitating observations in greater detail along with glass panel doors to also allow extra light.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Staff minutes of meeting held attached.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted.

A copy of the invoice was submitted.

Administration of Medication:

A copy of the form was submitted.

Safe Sleep:

A copy of the updated sleep record was submitted.

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider are suitable to address the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) On a review of the attendance records over the previous week, children's arrival and departure had been recorded. Staff initialled the attendance books when recording the children's arrival and departure time.

(3) (a)(b) The door of the service was locked on the inspector's arrival, and a staff member had to allow them to enter the building. The staff bring each child to the door when they are going home and use this opportunity to give a short overview of the child's day.

The inspectors signed the visitors book record the time of entry and exit, the reason for the visit and contact details.

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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 had ensured that a person trained as a first aid responder was available to the children at all times. Six staff members had up to date First Aid Responder training.
- (2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the main office. First Aid boxes were also available in each room.

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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these were available on the day. The last fire drill was carried out on the 16 December 2025.
- (b) The maintenance records for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were displayed on the wall in the hallway. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on 19 March 2025, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on the 9 December 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each of the care rooms and at the exits.