

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH034
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Name of Service:	Busy Kids Creche
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Address of Service:	Cloghanboy, Ballymahon Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 PV24
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Moore
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date 1 of Inspection:	16/06/2025
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Date 2 of Inspection:	17/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	61
Day 2	AM	77	PM	64

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. O'Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Description of service

This full day care service is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years and operates from 07:30 to 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is part of a multiple.

The Early Years' Service is located in a two-storey purpose-built premises. The baby room, wobbler room, toddler room and two sleep rooms are located on the ground floor. Four pre-school rooms are in operation on the first floor. An office, kitchen, breakout area, staff room and laundry area are also provided.

Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available.

The service is urban in its location in a residential area in the town of Athlone, County Westmeath.

Staffing

There are twenty-eight staff employed in the service. The designated person in charge, deputy designated person in charge and sixteen childcare staff were present and working directly with the children on the 16 June 2025. The service was supported by a full time cook and a part time cleaner. The co-ordinator of the childcare service attended the service after the inspectors' arrival and was present for the closing meeting. The registered provider does not work with children.

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 announced 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.

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, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The designated person in charge were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge and deputy were present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Clear management structures were in place and displayed in the corridor of the service.

Twenty-nine files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available for twenty-nine adults from past employers and from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the twenty-nine files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of ten adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Adults working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

(7)(b)(c)

Further to the Corrective Action and Preventive Action response from the last inspection on the 8 October 2024 evidence of training undertaken by staff in the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 was available and reviewed.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

Day 1 There were 76 children attending the service supervised directly by sixteen adults.

Day 2 There were 77 children attending the service supervised directly by seventeen adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The parental information reviewed included the required information in respect of Regulation 16(1)(a) to (g).

- (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) policies and procedures.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available in respect of (a)(b)(c).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The care practices and routines were child led with the staff following the individual verbal and non-verbal cues of the child. Children were encouraged to feed themselves at mealtimes and staff assisted the children as required. The chef provided healthy meals and snacks at regular times during the day. The afternoon snack is provided by parents. Bibs were worn by children at mealtimes to protect their clothes. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Good communication was observed between the staff members and children during nappy changing. Spare clothes were available for children if required. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snacks and mealtimes. Children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff. Children were engaged happily in the various play experiences in the pre-school rooms supervised by staff.

Younger children were observed to explore their environment and crawl and play on the soft matting provided supervised by staff. A comfortable chair was available for staff to comfort and feed babies in the baby room. Individual needs led sleep was available to babies when needed. Younger children slept in a restful atmosphere in the adjacent sleep rooms and were physically checked every ten minutes by staff. A shared diary is in operation between the service and the child's family to communicate the daily routine including feeding, sleeping and nappy changing.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. The service's settling in policy was adhered to as babies attended the baby room on a phased in basis. The child's daily routine was displayed in the baby room. Individual care plans are in place for children as required. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

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 19 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)

Two separate sleep rooms were attached to the baby and wobbler rooms and equipped with thirteen cots. Low level beds were available for children over the age of two who required sleep. Soft furnishings were provided in the rest areas in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play areas were located to the rear of the premises. The perimeter was secured by a high-level concrete wall. Wooden fences divided the outdoor play into areas designated for older and younger children. These fences were secured by gates with sliding bolts. Side gates were key coded with the keypad located out of the reach of children.

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 entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. Access is gained through a bell and coded system at the main entrance door. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Safety checklists for the pre-school rooms and the outdoor play areas were available for review. Staff audit reviews were noted and reviewed.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Toys and equipment were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available for each pre-school room. The wash hand basins are plumbed with an instantaneous supply of hot and cold water. Child size sinks were in place in ECCE 1 and ECCE sessional on the first floor and the wobbler and toddler rooms on the ground floor since the last inspection on the 8 October 2024.

The sanitary accommodation was stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and paper hand towels. Pedal bins were in place in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste materials. Children's creams and nappies were stored individually in baskets in the sanitary accommodation. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Bottles of baby formula and soothers were stored correctly in individual containers. Fridges were available in each pre-school room for the storage of perishable goods. The temperature of the fridge was recorded on a daily basis.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Signage indicated the service is a nut free zone.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in electronic record system maintained in the service. Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 18.8 to 19.5 degrees Celsius. Air conditioning units were in place in the baby and wobbler sleep rooms. A digital thermometer was noted in the sleep rooms.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the service and a fire assembly point was in place.

Outing:

Risk assessment documentation was completed and available for review in respect of an outing conducted on 16 June 2025.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)
A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.

(4)
The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1)

Fourteen adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the hours of operation on a rostered basis.

(2)(a)

A stocked first aid box was readily available on the ground and first floors.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school 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 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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 13 May 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 23 July 2024 and 13 March 2025 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge submitted a notification of incident form to TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate on the 16 May 2025 in respect of (d).