

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX075
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Name of Service:	Little Giggles Playschool
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Address of Service:	Killahard, Blackwater, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y21 C984
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Fikentscher
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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 Giggles is a privately owned preschool service offering full day care to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service is located in a rural area near the village of Blackwater at the provider's home.

Staffing

The service employs four staff to work in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider is the designated person in charge on the premises daily and works with the children in the rooms as needed. All the staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and 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.

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels,

Regulation 19 - Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child,

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink,

Regulation 25 – First Aid, and

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued on 12 September 2025 under Regulation 9: Management and Recruitment for the absence of a Garda vetting disclosure. The registered provider submitted a copy of the Garda vetting disclosure to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate on the 22 September 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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)(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service on the inspector's arrival. There was a second named staff member available to deputise as needed.

The files for all staff working in the service were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

There were validated references for two employees kept in each staff member's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for three staff working in the service. The service demonstrated partial compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years. See regulation 23.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for staff who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

There were certificates of qualification for all staff members working directly with the preschool children available on file.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two written references for two staff were not available on file.

(c)

There was no Garda vetting disclosure available on file in respect of one adult working directly with children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Garda Vetting disclosure and references are on file.

An annual staff file check list with expire dates noted in each staff's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two references, Garda vetting.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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 were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

During the morning there were 4 staff caring for 25 children.

During the afternoon there were 2 staff caring for 11 children.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service consisted of three interconnected playrooms, with direct access to an outdoor play area. Each of the rooms were equipped with a wide variety of play materials, which were of good quality and suitable for the age and stage of development for the children. Open shelving with clear labelled boxes of toys and materials allowed children to access toys and materials independently during free play. The staff set up invitations to play at some tables for the children to freely choose what they wished to play with. The playrooms had personalised touches that included family photos, birthday walls, and individually named hooks for children to hang their coats and bags on.

The outdoor area was fully enclosed and provided children with sufficient space. The area included a mud kitchen, football area, sand play, climbing frames, ride-on toys and a covered area for additional opportunities for play on wet days.

The children from all rooms were observed to enjoy time in the outdoor area, free play, tabletop activities such as cutting and gluing, story time and snack time together during the morning.

The service had an identified quiet area for children to rest during the day and there were soft sofas and sleep mattresses available to the children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Parents were asked to supply the food for their children. The service had a supply of additional foods and snacks for children in the event they forgot their lunch or were hungry.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Large numbers of the children's drink bottles contained juice. This practice posed a risk of dental decay.
2. A number of the children's lunch boxes contained items such as popcorn, crisps, chocolate snacks, biscuits and sugary snack foods which was not in line with the service's healthy eating policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A newsletter highlighting the importance of healthy, including the Healthy Eating guidelines

[http://www.safefood.net/Healthy-Eating/Childrens-Food-Pyramid-\(1\)](http://www.safefood.net/Healthy-Eating/Childrens-Food-Pyramid-(1)) with a healthy eating policy was emailed to parents. The Safefood Healthy eating lunchboxes for preschoolers leaflet HSE was sent home in children's bags.

Upon enrolment, the full Healthy Eating policy will be given to parents, so they are aware of the foods not permitted to help parents understand and encourage the importance of healthy lunches / snacks / meals for children's daily health.

Supporting documentation submitted

Healthy eating policy and newsletter.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years. There were Garda vetting disclosures on file for three staff members, however the vetting disclosure for two staff members were not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda vetting.

Infection Control:

1. A number of inconsistencies during nappy changing were observed and at variance with the service's infection control measures:
 - Children were not observed to have their hands washed after nappy changing which is not in line with the service's nappy changing policy.
 - Staff were not observed to consistently wash their hands between nappy changes.
 - Staff did not wear aprons during nappy changes.
 - The changing mat was not cleaned between all nappy changes.
2. A number of the children's lunch boxes were observed stored in their school bags and not in the fridge.

Safe Sleep:

1. There were no written records maintained to document sleeping children in the service.
2. There was no thermometer available to monitor the temperatures in the playrooms and areas identified for children to sleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Updated Garda vetting is now on file. An annual review of staff files will be carried out.

Infection Control:

1. Nappy Changing procedures have been highlighted with staff. A copy of procedures displayed on the wall, next to the changing area. All Equipment is ready and available with easy access.

At a staff meeting a review of the nappy changing procedures was reviewed.

2. We will ensure on a daily basis, in line with the healthy eating policy to store all foods/lunch boxes in the correct manner at the required temperature. We will check bags.

Safe Sleep:

1. Sleep record book are available and recorded in when sleeping/rest occurs.
2. Thermometers are in every room and checked daily and every 10 minutes when child is at rest.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the nappy changing area. The nappy changing procedure. Sleep log record book. Photograph of thermometers and sleep policy.

Summary Comment

The requirements of regulation are met.

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. Four staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard.
- (2)
- Suitably equipped first aid boxes were in the service and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for a full day care for 33 children.