

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX078
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Name of Service:	Little Munchkins Childcare
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Address of Service:	Booley Hill, Fethard On Sea, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y34 D578
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Molloy
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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 Munchkins Childcare is a privately operated service which opened in 2014. It is in a rural community in south county Wexford. The service is situated on the grounds of the registered provider's home. It is registered to provide a full day care service to 40 children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is also registered to provide a school age service to 20 children. The service consists of three preschool rooms, toilets, and a nappy changing area. There is enclosed play area to the rear of the service and a tarmacked area in front of the entrance to the service.

Staffing

There were five staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the children held the minimum of level 5 and above in early childhood care and education on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play

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Regulation 22 Food and Drink

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child

Regulation 25 First aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety

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, 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*

(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 person in charge on the day of inspection. There was a person available to deputise if required.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were five staff employed in the service. Written and validated references were available on file for all staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service demonstrated partial compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for 4 staff. Please see regulation 23 in this report.

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(d)

Police vetting was not required as there were no staff who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with the children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The adult child ratios were always maintained on the morning of the inspection.

10:40

There were 36 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff.

Non-Compliance Information

The adult child ratios were not always maintained on the afternoon of the inspection.

For example:

At 14:15

There were 9 preschool and 17 school age children in the care of two staff while an additional staff member went to collect children from school. A minimum of 3 staff were required to care for this number of children.

At 15:15

There were 5 preschool and 17 school age children in the care of two staff where a minimum of 3 staff were required.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Another member of staff who was working in our school age service has achieved their level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education and is now also working directly with our preschool children. The registered provider will ensure going forward the adult child ratios are always maintained in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A certificate of qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 preschool rooms were provided with play equipment for the learning and enjoyment of the children attending. The play equipment was stored on open shelves in all rooms which allowed the children to access the toys and play equipment independently.

The toddler room was observed to be developed with the play and developmental needs of the children in mind. The area of interest which had been developed for the children. There was original art displayed which the children had of their handprints with paint and glitter. There was a home corner, low level shelves with a supply of story books, dolls and buggies for children to play with.

The ECCE room 1 was accessed directly from the main entrance of the service. There was a supply of plastic bricks and puzzles which the children were observed enjoying on the afternoon of the inspection. Original artwork showing drawings of teddy bears was on display on the drying racks in the room.

The largest room in the service, the ECCE 2 room was well resourced to cater for the older children in the service. There was a dress up area which had a variety of outfits for children to wear while enjoying free play. The children had lots of room to move about the large preschool room.

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The outdoor area was enclosed and provided a natural environment and equipment for children to play and learn. There was a wooden playhouse, a wigwam and goal posts. The area to the front of the service was resourced with a variety of ride on toys for children to enjoy on the tared surface around the registered provider's house.

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 parents provided all meals and snacks for the children. The service had a healthy eating policy which detailed the type of food and schedule of meals and snacks provided for the children. Children were observed enjoying their morning snack. Parents had provided a variety of healthy foods which included fruit, sandwiches, diced vegetables and cheese on crackers. Staff who spoke to the inspector said additional food was available from the registered provider's kitchen if required by the children.

Children who were attending the full day care service were given meals provided by their parents which were reheated in the service. Children had access to their drink bottles which were provided by their parents and refilled as needed by the staff in the service.

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 door was secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised people gaining access to the service. There was also a secure gate to ensure children did not exit until there was a parent available to collect them and bring them to their cars. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves which were inaccessible to children. The large outdoor area to the rear of the service was safe, suitable, and secure. The play area to the front of the service was secured with an electric gate.

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Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy. Children were observed washing their hands after using the toilet and after messy play. The service was clean with no obvious maintenance required. Meals and snacks provided by parents were stored in the fridges in the service. Nappy changing was attended to, and the procedures were in line with the services nappy changing policy.

Accident and incidents

The service had a policy on the management of accidents and incidents in the service. Previous records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were reviewed by the inspector. Records were signed by parents and were in line with the policy in place in the service.

Administration of medication policy

The service had an administration of medication policy. All medicines were stored out of reach of the children.

Outings

The service does not accommodate outings.

Non-Compliance Information

The Garda vetting for the registered provider had not been renewed in the past 3 years as required in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff and registered providers.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure their Garda vetting is renewed every three years going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of an e-mail confirming Garda vetting is now in place for the registered provider was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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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)
There were three staff trained in a first aid responder course and were available to cover the roster in the service.

(2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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)
There was a template in place in the service to record any fire drill that takes place in the service. The last fire drill took place in service in December 2025.

(4)
There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

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Non-Compliance Information

(b)

There was no record in place to demonstrate that the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment had been serviced in the past year.

There was no record in place to demonstrate the smoke alarm had been serviced in the past year.

This non-compliance was identified on previous inspections of the service on 6 March 2020 and 9 February 2023.

It is acknowledged that confirmation both the fire alarm and the fire maintenance equipment were serviced shortly after the inspection was received by the inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has signed a contract with a fire maintenance company to ensure the regular maintenance of the fire equipment and fire alarm is carried out annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the maintenance of the fire alarm and the fire equipment was received by the inspector. This maintenance was carried out in January 2026 shortly after the inspection.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.