

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016GY007
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Name of Service:	Sticky Fingers
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Address of Service:	No.7 The Glade, Athenry, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H65 F773
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Hynes
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	08/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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

Sticky Fingers provides a range of services including full day, part-time and sessional care. Operating hours are from 08:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 09:00 to 12 noon, school term time only. The service accommodates children aged from 1 to 6 years of age. A school age care service operates in the morning from 08:00 to 09:00 and in the afternoon from 13:30 until 17:30.

The service is located on a residential housing estate in the town of Athenry in east county Galway. On the ground floor there are two rooms namely- Toddler and School Age Care and on the first floor there is a Pre-school Care room. The office area, kitchen where meals are prepared and cooked on site and the designated sleep room are located on the ground floor, along with the adult toilet. Children's sanitary areas are located on the ground and first floor. The secure outdoor play area is located at the rear of the service. A car park is located at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are 10 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider, an adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), a cook, kitchen assistant, a contractor and two school age care 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Records of a Pre-School Child with ten records in total reviewed of children attending from both the Pre-school and Toddler care rooms.

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, as far 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 register provider was the designated person in charge. A named person was available to deputise as required.
- (b) Both the registered provider and the deputy were observed working in the service while the early years children were on the premises.
- (c) A detailed management structure was available on the noticeboard in the hallway and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

- (2) Recruitment files of all 10 adults were reviewed.
- (a) Sixteen of the required 20 written and validated references were from past employers.
- (b) The remaining 4 of the required 20 validated references were from sources other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 10 adults which evidenced compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) An overseas police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.
- (4) There was evidence that 4 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, one adult had a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The 5 remaining adults did not require a childcare qualification.

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) Observation of staff on the day and the staff roster evidenced that there were an adequate number of adults available while the early years children were present in the service.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met.
- There were 5 adults working directly with 20 children in the morning and 4 adults working with 12 children in the afternoon.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were at least two adults on the premises while the early years children were present on the premises.

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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 10 children's pre-school records from the Toddler and Preschool rooms were reviewed, all 10 were noted to include the required information.

(3)

(c) The children's pre-school records were available in the service for review.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, deputy and staff were observed to be kept in the staff recruitment files in the office.
- (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide were available on the Tusla Registration Certificate displayed on the notice board in the reception area and in the Parent Handbook which staff stated had been given to all parents at the start of the new term.
- (c) The details of the adult child ratios were available in the Parent Handbook.
- (d) (e) (f) The type of care programme available was detailed in the Parent Handbook along with the facilities available, opening hours and fees.
- (g) The services policies and procedures, required for Regulation 10, were kept in soft form in the office area and

were referenced in the Parent Handbook.

- (h) Attendance records for each child were available and stored in attendance books available in the care rooms. The records dated from 15 August 2025. Each child's time of entry and exit were recorded for each day while attending the service. The recorded entry and exit times of the children were observed to be within the operating hours of the service from 08:00 to 17:30. The sign in times for the 4 children from the Toddler and 16 children from the Pre-school care room were documented for the day of inspection.
- (i) The staff rosters were noted to have been completed daily with each adult's hours of work and lunch break recorded.
- (j) Four records were available from 16 October 2025 until 4 December 2025 which detailed the medication administered in the service. The four records were found to have all the required information recorded.
- (k) The six accident/incident forms recorded from the 10 September 2025 through to the 9 October 2025 were reviewed. These were found to contain all the particulars required.
- (3) The records referred to above were open to review on the premises.

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

Basic needs:

- A 3-week menu plan was visible in the hallway of the service. Staff stated breakfast consisting of oat and wheat-based cereals was available in the morning between 08.00 and 09.00. Morning snacks in both the Toddler and Pre-school care rooms, provided by parent's/guardians, were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples consisted of pancakes, filled sandwiches, cheese, yogurts and a variety of bite sized pieces of fruit.
- A hot lunch of chicken casserole with mashed potatoes and carrots, made of by the cook, was served in the Toddler care room at 11:55. The dietary requirements of individual children was observed to be catered for.
- Children were observed having access to age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery. Children in the Toddler care room had access to spoons and bowls. The older age group of children, sitting at tables in the

Pre-school care room, had access to forks and plates. Water stored in individual water bottles was readily available from easily accessible tables nearby.

- Nappy changing in the Toddler sanitary area was conducted regularly and promptly and handled in a positive and sensitive manner. The staff member from the Toddler care room was observed engaging the children throughout this time using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently in Pre-school care room with staff nearby to provide support if required.
- In each care room children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size vinyl couches in the designated rest/quiet areas.
- Staff were heard communicating respectfully and responding promptly with individual children reminding them to use gentle and kind hands in their interactions with their friends.

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:

- Suitable handrails were provided on the ramp at the entrance of the service and on the indoors stairs to support children navigating safely to and from the service.
- All external doors were secured to prevent unauthorised adults from entering the service. The kitchen and adult toilet doors were secured to prevent the children entering unsafe areas.
- Glass panels in the front door facilitated the adults to view callers before opening.
- Blind cords in the care rooms and sleep room were secured and made safe with hooks onto the walls placed out of reach of the children.
- All windows were fitted with restrictors to prevent children from falling or exiting from them.
- All indoor and outdoor toys appeared to in good condition and well maintained.
- Flexes from radios and monitors were secured out of reach of the children.
- The feeding chair in use in the Toddler care room was fitted with a five-point harness, ensuring that the children are secured safely while eating.
- The safety camera monitor was mounted securely in the office area off the main hallway.

- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving out of reach of the children in the care rooms and sanitary areas.
- The perimeter of the rear outdoor play area was secured with high wooden panelling and two high metal gates ensuring no unauthorised adults could gain entry or that children could not leave the area unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Staff supported children with the use of tissues building an awareness of healthy habits.
- Perishable food, provided by the parents/guardians for morning snack, was stored in the service fridge preventing the food from spoiling.
- Cleaning schedules were noted to be up to date and completed for each area.
- Microwave sterilisers were stated as being in use for children's soothers, preventing the spread of infection.
- Staff were observed sanitising tables before and after mealtimes and messy activities. Floors were observed being swept keeping the areas clean and hygienic after mealtimes and when the children went down to sleep after lunch in the Toddler care room.
- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, dispensing soap and paper towels. Pedal operated bins were in use for the disposal of paper waste.
- Children's personal belongings were stored in individually labelled drawers preventing cross infection.
- Single use aprons and gloves were observed in use in the Toddler sanitary area. The staff member was observed disposing of the used aprons and gloves and reapplying new ones after each nappy change. The mat and area were sanitised after each use and handwashing by the adults and children was observed. A pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed tall nappy changing bin was available for the hygienic disposal of used nappies.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered on inspection.
- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original container, was available and the expiry dated was noted as 11/2027.

Safe Sleep:

- Physical sleep records were furnished which evidenced that sleep checks were recorded every 10 minutes for the 5 children sleeping in cots. The documentation recorded included details such as each child's position, pallor, breathing and the room temperature in line with the service's safe sleep policy.
- Sleep room temperatures, in the designated sleep room, where all children were aged over 12 months, were recorded between as 21°C, within the required temperatures of 18°C to 22°C.
- Cots were placed at least 50 centimetres apart in each of the designated sleep room.

Fire Safety:

- All fire doors were unobstructed aiding in the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- Fire extinguishers were anchored with brackets to the walls of the service.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the front car park, a safe distance from 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) A First Aid Responder certificate (FAR) was available which indicated that one staff member was trained as a FAR; the staff roster indicated the staff member was available while the early years children were on the premises. In addition, at least two staff members had training in paediatric first aid.

(2)

(a) The well stocked first aid boxes were stored within easy reach of the adults in the care room, kitchen and office.

(b) The first aid boxes were available at all times while the early years children were on the premises.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (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) Written records of the fire drills that took were available in the service. The last date recorded was noted as 19 November 2025 with previous monthly drills recorded as 2 October and 15 September 2024.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. Both the firefighting certificate and the smoke alarm certificates were dated 15 August 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) (a) and (b) were available on the premises for review.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were displayed on the inside of the main entrance door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation was available to evidence that the registered provider had adequate insurance for the type of service provided and the number of children attending.