

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MO003
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Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Castlebar Road, Westport, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F28 A6W7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bronwyn O'Donnell
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/08/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Clinical and Administration Building, Block A (First Floor Green Corridor), Merlin Park University Hospital. Galway. H91 ER2D
Inspection undertaken by:	B. Lavin and E. Friel
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

Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre is a private early years care and education facility providing a range of services including full day care, part-time and sessional services. It is registered to cater for children aged between 1 and 6 years of age and the hours of operation are from 08:00 to 17:30, 51 weeks of the year.

The service is in the town of Westport in county Mayo and it operates from a two-storey converted commercial premises. There are 4 care rooms; 2 are situated on the ground floor (Pre-school 1 and Pre-school 2) and 2 upstairs (Wobbler Ducklings and Toddler Turtles). The 2 upstairs care rooms were also in use as sleep rooms after lunch and the Pre-school 2 room was not in use. Child and adult sanitary areas, a nappy changing area and kitchen are also located on the premises. There are 3 separate, graduated, outdoor play areas to the rear of the building directly accessible from the ground floor playroom.

Staffing

The service employs 9 adults, 6 of whom were working on the day of inspection including the registered provider. In addition, the managing director, who is not employed by the service, was on site from 10:50 to facilitate the administrative requirements of the inspection and the catering of lunch.

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

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.

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.

(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;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise, if required.

(b) The designated person in charge and the person appointed to deputise were on the premises when the inspectors arrived.

(2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 2 adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 4th June 2025. The following records were available for the 2 adults:

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for both adults adhering to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) One of 2 curricula vitae was on file for 1 of 2 adults which indicated that no overseas police vetting was required for this adult as they had not lived outside the state for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to indicate that both adults had at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (7)(a) In conversation, staff stated that induction had taken place on commencement of employment. Documentary evidence was available including job description, explanation of duties and roles, employment handbook, reading of policies and procedures and code of behaviour.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a) (b) Two references and validations were missing in respect of 2 staff members for whom they were required.
- (d) One of 2 adults did not have a curriculum vitae, therefore overseas police vetting for this adult could not be established.
- (7)(a) Supervision of staff was not taking place as per the supervision policy of the service. While the policy stated that supervision took place every month, records documented that the last date recorded for supervision was in the first quarter of 2022. This posed a potential risk that staff are not being given the opportunity to engage in regular supervision to support their work practices and ensure that best practice in childcare is being maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

- (2) (a) One staff member has since left the service and 2 references and validations are now on file for the second adult. In future, all required documentation will be in place prior to commencement of employment.
- (d) A curriculum vitae is now on file for the staff member for whom it was required which indicated that no overseas police vetting was required.
- (7) (a) Supervision sessions have been arranged with staff members for the end of September 2025 when all staff have returned to work. Further sessions will be carried out every 3 months in line with the revised Staff Supervision and Support Policy. Informal and formal meetings take place regularly with staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentation was received in the office of the inspectorate;

- (2) (a) Two validated references were received in the office of the inspectorate for the adult for whom they were required. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
- (d) A copy of a curriculum vitae which was outstanding evidencing that no overseas police vetting was required.
- (7) (a) A copy of a new supervision template.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation (9) (2) (a), (d) and (7) (a).

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies, procedures and statements in Schedule 5 were reviewed and met the necessary requirements:

- Induction and Recruitment.
- Behaviour Management.
- Staff training and development

Non-Compliance Information

- The staff supervision policy did not state what records would be kept, where they would be stored or for how long. Information was also missing from the policy on details of staff training kept in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

- The Staff Supervision and Support Policy has been amended to include that supervision notes will be stored on staff files, they will be retained for 6 years and will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the office. Supervision will be carried out with each staff member every 3 months. The remaining policies and procedures of the service are scheduled for review on 19 September 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the Staff Supervision and Support Policy with amendments was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 10.

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) There were 5 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the day of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Preschool room 1: Two adults caring for 18 children, aged between 2 years 6 months and 5 years of age, in the morning and 15 children in the afternoon.
- Wobbler Ducklings room: 1 adult caring for 6 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age in the morning and afternoon.
- Toddler Turtles room: 1 adult caring for 3 children aged between 1 and 3 years of age in the morning and 1 child in the afternoon.

(8) (a) There were 2 adults present in the service while the pre-school children were on the premises.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(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

- (1)(i) Details of the staff roster were available in the service and furnished to the inspectors. These detailed each staff members; working hours and break times and included relief staff present on the day.
- (3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were furnished to the inspector on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(k) Six of 12 accident/incident/injury reports sampled, from April 2025, were missing the following information which may compromise the health and well-being of the child should the relevant persons not be informed of the incident/accident/injury or if the care administered while the child is in the service is not documented:

- One record was missing the care of the child
- Three records were missing a parent/guardian signature
- Two records were missing the manager's signature

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

- (k)
- The staff member responsible for the record of the care of the child is no longer employed by the service, therefore the record could not be completed.
 - One of 3 parent signatures is now documented. The remaining 2 children have since left the service and the parental signatures cannot be obtained.
 - The manager has signed the 2 children's records for whom the manager's signature was missing.

All staff have been reminded of the importance of filling out the requirements of the children's records correctly. The children's records will be reviewed by management to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the following documentation was received in office of the inspectorate;

(k) One of 3 parental signatures and the signature of the manager on the 2 children's records for whom they were outstanding. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 (k).

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

Supporting relationships

- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. The inspector observed a child receiving comfort in the toddler room during their settling in. The staff member offered reassurance and communicated using soft gentle tones.
- In the Pre-school 1 room staff supported children to engage positively with one another and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child. Examples included verbal communication at drop off and collection times and through a messaging group.
- All staff members observed on the day were observed to be kind and respectful in their interactions with the pre-school children. Praise and encouragement were regularly given with phrases of ‘good job guys’ ‘well done’ and ‘super work’. The service ensured that transitioning to the service went as smooth as possible. One child who had just begun in the service was following a planned, graduated settling-in program which involved time specific durations of stay in the service to ensure this placement was appropriate and that the child settled well into the service.

Programme of activities

- There was a varied programme of activities offered to the children daily. This programme was developed with both short term and long-term goals. For the summer months of July and August the programme of activities was adapted to allow for more free play, sensory and active play.
- Children’s choice was included in the development of play activities and emerging interests were developed within the care rooms. The children were given choice in participating in larger group activities or to play in smaller groups. Children had a choice in the games they participated in. Staff members were observed to create play opportunities such as arts and crafts and board games following the lead of children’s own ideas.
- Staff members talked to the children in a manner which encouraged language development. Children’s attempts to say new words were recognised and encouraged with repeating back what the child had said and providing praise and acknowledgement for description words such as the “black bin”.

(3)

- The inspectors did not observe any practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- The privacy and dignity of the children from the Wobbler Ducklings and Toddler Turtles care rooms was not respected in the nappy changing room. The inspector observed staff members changing the nappies of multiple children in the nappy changing room at the same time. In conversation, the registered provider stated that this was due to an unexpected staff absence on the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

- An additional staff member has been employed to ensure that the individual toileting needs of the children are being addressed. Staff have been reminded of the privacy and dignity needs of the children while nappy changing.

Supporting documentation submitted

- The statements from the registered provider have been accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19.

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 main door was secured on arrival and was operated with a bell and a camera. A staff member answered the door ensuring no unauthorised adult could gain entry or that no child could leave the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing, hedging and a high wooden gate with a sliding bolt placed out of the children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Sweeping brushes in the downstairs sanitary area, in use by the Pre-school 1 children, were stored out of reach of the children.
- A new pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed nappy bin was available in the nappy changing area located on the first floor.
- The mat and immediate surrounding area appeared clean in the nappy changing area on the first floor. The cleaning record was noted to be completed and up to date. In conversation, staff stated that cleaning and sanitising of the area took place after each nappy change in line with the service's nappy changing policy.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children attending the service were observed being supervised by qualified staff members at all times. During indoor activities, supervision was primarily by sight.

- Staff members were observed to be seated alongside children offering support, prompting and encouraging children as they played.
- In the outdoors staff members were strategic in where they positioned themselves ensuring all children could be seen as they played.
- Mealtimes were supervised as staff members sat alongside children, offering support, assisting with opening yoghurts, cutting or mashing food as required.
- Sleep time was supervised by staff members remaining in the sleep room or care room supervising sleep and completing physical 10-minute checks.
- Children who were able to use the toilet were supported to do so independently. Staff remained within hearing range of the children and encouraged good hand hygiene. Children were given the full attention of staff members during nappy changing. The equipment needed for the nappy change was observed to be within easy reach and staff remained close by supervising the children at all times.