

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017WD501
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Name of Service:	The Growing Tree Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Deerpark Road, Lismore, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	P51 TW59
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tanya Morrissey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office Cork Road Waterford City X91 VX09
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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

The Growing Tree is a private early years service in the town of Lismore, Co Waterford. The service is based in a renovated building on the grounds of the local primary school in the town. There are two care rooms and sanitary facilities and an outdoor area at the rear and the side of the building.

The service is registered to offer two sessions operating from 09:00 to 12:00 and 12:15 to 15:15, five days a week. The service cares for up to 31 children aged between 3 and 6 years.

Staffing

The registered provider employs three staff members and is also rostered to work directly with the 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 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 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child;

Regulation 16 - Record in Relation to a Pre-school Service;

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;

Regulation 22 - Food and Drink;

Regulation 24 – Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance;
Regulation 25 – First Aid;
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;
Regulation 28- Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child, regulation 16(1)(h) Records of a preschool child and regulation 24 - Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance.

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, 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)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. The management structure was displayed in the hallway of the service and included in the parental handbook.

(2)

Following a review of information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, the inspector reviewed four files, including the registered provider's file.

(a)(b) The required references were available for review by the inspector.

(c) Garda vetting was available for the four adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that staff working with preschool children had achieved 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) On review of the staff files, police vetting was not available for one staff member who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting was applied for and received by the registered provider. They stated that they have developed a recruitment checklist, which will be used when employing new staff members. This form includes the requirement for police vetting if a person has resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than six months and they stated that this checklist will act as a reminder to ensure a thorough recruitment process has been applied.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required Police vetting was submitted to the inspectorate on the 26 February 2026.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. In the morning, 3 staff members were caring for 18 preschool children. In the afternoon, there was 2 staff members caring for 16 children. The registered provider was rostered to work directly with the children.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) Twelve children's records were reviewed and the details required from (a) to (i) was included on these forms.

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;*

Compliance Information

- (1) The details required from (a) to (i) was available to the inspector. The information was included in the staff files, the parental handbook, (which is emailed to each parent), displayed on the parents notice board in the hallway and included in the attendance record book.

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 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.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or
- shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Materials and equipment were available on low shelving in both care rooms allowing children the opportunity to choose their activities independently. There was a mixture of natural and artificial materials available. The furniture, fixture and fittings were suitable for the age and stage of the children in each room.
- The layout of the rooms created areas of interest for the children, categorising material and equipment into various themes for example, the small world play, the home corner, imagination play, and arts and crafts. Shelving and trays were all labelled with photographs of the material to aid children in choosing their equipment, this also supported the children tidying up when finished their activity.
- These areas were equipped with sufficient material for the children attending the service and reflected the children’s interests, for example, the farm set was in the small world area and dress up clothes for the imagination play. There were visual displays in the rooms at the children’s level which included the daily routine, children attendance and the evacuation procedures for the fire drills.
- The children’s identity and belonging were reflected in the rooms with the use of the children’s names and photographs at the coat hooks, on the birthday posters, photographs of the extended families on the family tree and the children’s individual artwork displayed at their level.

(b) Each of the playrooms had a cosy area away from the main play area where children could sit, rest and take a break from their play. The books were stored in this area along with the children's individual art portfolios.

(2) The outdoor area at the side and rear of the premiss was secured with fencing and a locked gate. There was a covered area which the children used on the day of the inspection during a rain shower. The outdoor area had several solid structures for the children to climb on, crawl through and sit on. It was also furnished with a variety of material and equipment which offered sensory opportunities, for example, a path with various textures, a planting box, a sand tray with scoops and spades, and a water chute wall. There were various balance bikes, trikes, and pedal tractors. The toys included large construction blocks and plastic waffles and builder's hard hats.

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 registered provider stated that children's snacks are provided by the parents daily. The children were observed to have their snack at 10:40 and it appeared to be a social occasion with staff sitting with the children and chatting creating a positive atmosphere. Children were encouraged to be independent and were observed putting their rubbish in the appropriate bins and packing their lunch boxes and hanging their bags on their personalised hooks in the hallway.

Children were noted to eat healthy foods including rice cakes, sandwiches, crackers, cheeses, and a variety of fruits. Each child had their own bottle of water which they could access if required.

These observations reflected the Snack and Healthy Eating policy of the service.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On a review of the attendance records over the month of December 2025, children attendance had been recorded.

(3) (a)(b) The door of the service was locked on the inspector's arrival and staff member had to allow them to enter the building. The registered provider explained how the parent's line at the front door to drop or collect the children. The staff then bring each child to the door for the handover and use this opportunity to give a short overview of the child's morning or afternoon.

The inspector signed the visitors book record the time of entry and exit, the reason for the visit and contact details. These procedures mitigated the risk of unauthorised access.

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 as a first aid responder was available to the children at all times. Two staff members had up to date First Aid Responder training.
- (2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the press in Preschool room 1.

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 fire fighting 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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these was available on the day. The last fire drill was carried out on the 15 December 2025.
- (b) The maintenance records for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were displayed on the wall in the hallway. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on 13 March 2025, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on the 18 December 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each of the care rooms and at the exits.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured for up to 31 sessional children with an expiry date of the 28 March 2026.