

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LK005
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Name of Service:	Hope Childcare
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Address of Service:	Rathwood, Murroe, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 Y6T8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sherene Powell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St. Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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

This is a registered private service established in 2020. There are two buildings on the premises, Wing A is the crèche facility and Wing B is a two-storey building providing sessional and full day care to preschool children.

The crèche facility is a single storey premises that has 2 playrooms in operation, the Toddlers and the Baby playrooms, 2 sleep rooms, sanitary facilities for the children and adults, an office and a kitchen area.

The two-storey premises have 2 playrooms, playroom 1 located downstairs and playroom 2 upstairs to facilitate the older children attending for the sessional and full day care. Each playroom has its own sanitary facilities for the children.

The service has several outdoor spaces with a variety of surfaces such as grass, tarmac, and all-weather areas.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in this service. There are 9 staff members including the manager and the maintenance person employed to work in the service.

All the staff members working with the preschool children hold an appropriate childcare qualification in childcare.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 9(1)(a)(b)(c) 2(a)(b)(c)(d)(4)

Regulation 11(1)(2)

Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (i)

Regulation 19(1a)

Regulation 25, (1) (2) (a) (b)

Regulation 26, (1) (a) (b) (2) (a) (b)(c) (4)

Regulation 29, (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 regional manager, manager of this service, 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) The manager and the regional manager (visiting the service) were present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the manager was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The files of 2 staff members who started in the service in 2025/2026 were viewed and the Garda vetting of all other staff members were reviewed.

- (a) There were 4 written and validated references from previous employers available for the 2 members of staff who commenced employment at the service in 2025 and January 2026.
- (b) There references from other sources were not required for these two staff members.
- (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff members. The Garda vetting for the staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 4 persons who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) All staff members working directly with the preschool children had childcare qualifications.

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) The manager ensured that there were an adequate number of qualified staff members working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (2) On day there were 7 staff members including the manager working directly with 26 preschool children in the four playrooms and 7 staff members in the afternoon working with 21 preschool children availing of the part time and full day care.

This was compliant with the recommended adult/child ratios.

The regional manager was visiting the premises on the day of the inspection

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)(a)- (i) A sample of 11 preschool children records were examined and all the information required from (a)- (i) was maintained on each record.

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:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service to encourage and educate the children about the importance of good nutrition. Meals and snacks were prepared on-site daily and delivered to each room

individually. Children's drinks were easily accessible to them throughout the day. The staff sat with the children during mealtimes to give examples of positive social skills. The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed during the mealtime in the Baby room, the Toddler and the Preschool rooms. Each child was given plenty of time to eat and enjoy their drinks and meals without being rushed.

Sanitary facilities were conveniently located adjacent to each room. Nappy changing stations were positioned near the Toddler room and the Baby room. All children's toiletries were securely stored, clearly labelled, and placed within easy reach of staff to maintain safety and organisation. Children's privacy and dignity was respected at all times, including during toilet training, which was tailored to each child's developmental stage and readiness, rather than their age.

Each room was equipped with tissues and wipes within easy reach of the children, along with foot pedal, lidded bins for the safe disposal of used tissues and paper towels. To encourage independence and organisation, each child had a clearly labelled storage space and coat hook featuring their photo for personal belongings.

For children under two years of age, there were two sleep rooms situated close to the Baby and the Toddler rooms, furnished with standard cots. During sleep periods, children were closely monitored, and all sleep checks were documented in writing. Toddlers over two years who require sleep had access to low-level beds in the Toddler playroom, with a staff member present at all times while children slept. Additionally, rest areas with soft seating, cushions, blankets, and soft floor coverings were available in each room to provide comfort and relaxation.

Outdoor play was prioritised, with children encouraged to be outside as often as possible and a rota system ensured frequent outdoor play for all the preschool children throughout each day.

Each preschool child was assigned a key person to develop their trust and to be actively involved in the children play where appropriate.

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 members that had up to date children's first aid responder training in place.
- (2)(a) The person in charge ensured that suitable equipped first aid boxes for children were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions on the premises.
- (b) The first aid boxes were 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 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) There were fire drill records available on file for year 2025. The last recorded fire drill was dated 18th of December 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced in November 2025 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced in October and November of 2025. The maintenance records were available on the premises.
- (4) A fire action notice of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire was clearly displayed in the main entrance of the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (a) *of sound and stable structure,*
 - (b) *safe and secure,*
 - (c) *kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) *cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) *equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises appeared safe and secure. The main entrance doors were closed and there was a system in place to ensure no children could exit the premises unaccompanied and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation. The heating system was in operation due to the time of the year, and room temperatures were within the normal limits. Openable windows were in place to ensure a means of air circulation.

(d) The outdoor area play areas were routinely checked and cleaned, areas power washed as required and equipment maintained in good working order. The daily and weekly cleaning schedules were in place for the internal and external areas. The premises was rodent proofed, and a pest control company checked the facility on the 16th of November 2025.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available for the preschool children attending the service and for the adults working in the service. There were two designated nappy changing areas located off the Toddlers and Babies preschool rooms.