

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DL006
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Name of Service:	LMNO Childcare
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Address of Service:	Unit 2 Railway Court, Pearse Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen Gill, Kieran McWilliams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	21/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan
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

LMNO Childcare is a privately owned and operated preschool service located in the centre of Letterkenny. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care to children aged 1-6 years. The operating hours are from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday. The service operates from a converted commercial unit on the ground floor of an apartment building. There is a small outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

Seven adults are employed to work in the service, to work directly with the children. There are two registered providers who do not work in the service on a daily basis.

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 9,11,16,22,23,25,26 and 27.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 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)

The registered provider ensured that:

- a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- c) There was a clear management structure in the service.

(2)

On the most recent inspection dated the 19/11/2024, eight staff files were reviewed and satisfactory.

It was advised by the person in charge that four new staff had commenced in the service since the inspection conducted on 19/11/2024.

The four files were reviewed

- (a) Five written references from past employers for three of the adults.
- (b) Two written and references from a reputable source for one of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four adults. The service also demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Four of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1. One reference was not on file for one of the adults.
2. Six of the references on file were not validated.
3. One of the references on file was from a previous employment not listed on the employment record in respect of one adult.

(2)(d)

It could not be determined if police vetting was required for one adult due to the absence of an employment record.

(2)(a)(b) and (2)(d) were non-compliant on the last inspection dated 19 November 2024. Preventative actions submitted by the registered provider in respect of the previous noncompliance failed to prevent a reoccurrence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Reference obtained.
2. References validated.
3. CV updated to include reference.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted.
3. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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)

On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

On the morning of the inspection five adults cared for 16 children aged between 1 year and 1 month and four years.

On the morning of the inspection:

- In Caterpillar room, two adults cared for 6 children aged 1 to 2 years old.
- In Butterfly room, three adults cared for 10 children aged 2 years and 7 months to 4 years old.

In the afternoon:

- In Caterpillar room, two adults cared for 6 children aged 1 to 2 years old.
- In Butterfly room, four adults cared for 9 children aged 2 years and 7 months to 4 years old.

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.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in relation to (a) to (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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic need

- The children's individual drink bottles were available to them throughout the day.
- Meals and snacks were served at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly. Nappy changing time was used as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction between the child and their key worker.
- The individual sleep needs of the children were met on the day, as evidenced when a child in the caterpillar room displayed signs of tiredness, the key worker offered comfort to the child and placed the child for sleep in advance of the services scheduled sleep time.

Supporting relationships

- A key worker system was in place in the service with named staff assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with children as evidenced through documentation.
- The staff demonstrated warmth in their interactions with the children, praising positive behaviours such as sharing and turn taking.
- The staff present were observed to be consistent and positive in their interactions with the children. Positive behaviour was encouraged as the staff rewarded good behaviour and children's efforts with praise and acknowledgment. Children were alerted well in advance of transition to new activities such as mealtimes tidy up time and sleep time.
- The staff members were observed to work well as a team, frequently collaborating with each other in relation to activities and children's needs.
- Pictures of the children's families were displayed on the walls, creating a link between the child's home and preschool.

Physical and material environment

The butterfly room was equipped with a variety of materials to cater to the development of the preschool child. Low level shelving contained open ended materials such as magnets, construction blocks and plastic bricks and connecting pipes. For imaginary play, a home corner, a vehicle area, a teepee tent and dress up

costumes were available. The room was divided into different area with tables set up with activities to engage the children such as sponge painting and small group craft activities.

The room was decorated with the children's artwork and Halloween crafts.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

Physical and Material environment

On the day of the inspection, the rang of equipment available in the caterpillar room was inadequate for the provision of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for children. For example, a play kitchen and doll house were both empty of any materials required for children's play. There was a lack of clearly defined interest areas and lack of play materials. Due to the room layout, it was observed that activities were mainly adult led with minimal opportunity for child-initiated play.

Although some play equipment was present in the room, items were mixed up and not grouped together to afford a young child the experience of accessing a complete play set. For example, train pieces, puzzles pieces and construction blocks were together in one box.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded: The caterpillar room was not properly set up on the day of inspection. The staff have since been retrained on the importance of setting up the room each day so that the environment is inviting for the children to play in. They have also been retrained on the importance of ensuring that after sleep/meal times/outdoor play, that it is important for the rooms to be reset each time with toys in their correct boxes so that the children can easily find what toys they wish to play with. The manager and room leader will ensure that the room is properly set up each morning and that the toys are being reset after breaks in play so that the environment is always inviting for the children and easy to navigate.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 service provides all meals and snacks to children. The service has implemented a healthy eating policy in the service.

On the day of inspection, the children were provided with the following meals and snacks.

Breakfast: Cereal and Toast.

Snack: Pancakes and raisins.

Dinner: Savoury Mince, mashed potato and peas.

Afternoon snack: Fruit and yogurt with crackers.

A hot alternative was available should any child refuse their main meal. Drinking water was available to the children throughout the morning.

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 entrance into the service was secure on the inspector's arrival and remained secure during the inspection, preventing unauthorised entry.
- Internal doors in the building were secure to prevent a child leaving unsupervised.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall metal fencing and a secure gate.
- The kitchen was not accessible to any of the preschool children on the day of the inspection.

- Cleaning schedules were in place and reviewed

Infection Control:

- Aprons and gloves were available and observed in use by staff when changing of a child was required. The staff were observed disinfecting the nappy changing area after each child was changed.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be ventilated by mechanical ventilation and were observed to be maintained and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- When interviewed, staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication. On the day of the inspection, medicine was administered to a child and recorded correctly.
- Medicine was stored safely in the refrigerator in the kitchen.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with appropriate cots available for children under the age of 2. For children over the age of 2, stackable floor beds were available.
- Sleep checks were observed to occur every ten minutes.
- The Sleep room temperature was recorded at 18.1 °C on the day of inspection, within the acceptable range for safe sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- A green playmat in the caterpillar room was torn in places and holes in the material were visible.

Infection Control:

- In the sleep room, bed sheets in the wooden cots were stained and soiled, posing an infection control risk.
- In the caterpillar room nappy changing area, there were no hand towels available for hand drying.
- In the butterfly room nappy changing area, paper handtowels were stored loosely, not in an enclosed posing a risk of cross contamination and reducing the effectiveness of correct handwashing.
- On one occasion, after nappy changing staff did not wash their hands or the child's hands.
- Soothers were not stored hygienically and were left lying in cots overnight.
- There were visible stains on the blue stackable beds.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The green mat has been replaced in the caterpillar room.
2. The sheets have been replaced in the sleep room.
3. The hand towels have been provided.
4. The soothers are kept in labelled boxes and not left on the beds overnight,
5. The blue beds are deep cleaned on a weekly basis to remove any stains/marks.

All staff have been retrained on all the above and on the importance of procedure for proper handwashing.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Photographic evidence submitted.
5. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 was one staff member immediately available at all times with first aid for the preschool children.

(2)

(a) (b) There were two first aid boxes stored in an accessible position and clearly labelled in the 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) A record of fire drills was kept by the service with the most recent drill carried out on 25 September 2025.

(1)(b) Records were available to evidence that the firefighting equipment was last serviced in October 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced in August 2025.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in each area of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

On the day between 12:20 and 13:00, children over the age of two years of age in the sleep room did not have any adult supervision. Adults on site completed ten-minute sleep checks, however the required supervision for sleeping children in this age group is that an adult has to be present and required adult child ratios maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded:

The children over 2 years old who sleep are now supervised by an adult who stays in the room with them, rather than just with the cameras and microphones. 10-minute checks will continue on all sleeping children.

Supporting documentation submitted

None submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered providers ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 50 children up until 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The walls and doors throughout the service were in need of re painting, with heavy wear and tear evident in the following areas:

- The caterpillar nappy changing room.
- The caterpillar room

It is acknowledged that the person in charge informed the inspector that a painter has been booked and a date secured for the work to be carried out.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded: The painters have been booked and are work is due to take place over the Christmas break. The manager will continue to arrange repainting of the room every year or as needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence provided.

Summary Comment

This non-compliance remains outstanding and will be checked on the next inspection.