

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DS002
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Name of Service:	Ardilea Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Unit 103, Block C, Ardilea Crescent, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D14 H7N3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciaran Fitzpatrick
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	31/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency Brunel Building, Floor 7 Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	M Bermingham
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).

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Description of service

Ardilea Childcare is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care for 27 children aged 1-6 years. Opening hours are 08:00-18:00. The service operates in a purpose-built premises on the ground floor of an apartment block within a residential development. Children are cared for in two rooms. The Toddler room accommodates 10 children aged 1-2.5 years, and the preschool room accommodates 16 children aged 2.5-5 years. An ancillary room serves as a kitchen, office, and staff room. There is an enclosed outdoor space that is accessed directly from the Toddler room and off-road parking is available at the side of the building.

Staffing

There were six adults employed in the service who were all present on the day of inspection. Five adults were working directly with children and the person in charge provided cover in the rooms when required. In addition, a student was present on work placement. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection and does not work in the service.

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.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-school Child and Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service.

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-

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- (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.*

(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 service had a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and/or the deputy were rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
 - (c) A clear management structure was in place as evidenced by observing the operation of the service and through discussion with staff.
- (2) Documentation was reviewed for five adults who commenced in the service since the last inspection on 25 November 2024. The following vetting documents were found to have been considered:
- (a) Eight written and verified references from previous employers
 - (c) Five Garda vetting disclosures
 - (d) International police vetting certificates for adults who lived outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult
- (4) Records reviewed showed that four staff who were employed to work directly with children held the required qualification or recognised equivalent.

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Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)(b) Two written references were not sought or verified as required.

(3) It is acknowledged that the documentation specified in 9(2)(a) and (b) above was received and verified for four adults prior to the adults commencing in the service. However, two written references were not sought or verified for one adult prior to the adult commencing in the service, as required. Allowing adults work with children before their suitability is established may result in individuals who are not appropriate having access to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that:

- Two handwritten references were sought and verified by management and the student has since left the service.
- The manager will be responsible to ensure that all students on training will only start after the relevant references are verified.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 was adequately addressed.

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.

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(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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. Five adults worked directly with 22 children in the morning and with 20 children in the afternoon.

(8) (a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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.*

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Compliance Information

Ten child records were reviewed, of which six were found to contain the complete set of required information as follows:

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision for recording the date when the child would cease to attend the service.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents and an alternative contact, and information of how a parent or an alternative contact can be contacted during the operational hours of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) Provision for the recording of any illness, disability, allergy, or special needs of the child and relevant information to support the provision of special care or attention.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- (h) Record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.
- (i) Written consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Four of the ten child records under review did not contain the complete set of required information and were missing one or more of the following:

- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- (h) Record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.
- (i) Written consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the start dates were inserted on the child records, and parents filled in the authorisation for collection and medical practitioners' details as requested. Parents also provided an immunisation certificate and provided written consent for appropriate medical treatment required for the child in case of an emergency. Record forms were checked and updated accordingly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence was submitted.

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Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the responses submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 15 were adequately addressed.

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:

- (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

A record was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) The attendance records of children on the day of inspection were reviewed. Attendance was recorded showing children's full name, time of arrival and departure.
- (i) The staff roster was reviewed and found to contain daily details of the adults working in the service.
- (j) Ten medication administration records were reviewed. These records held details of medication administered to children with signed parental consent.
- (k) Ten accident and incident records were reviewed. These records held details of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children and were signed by staff and parents.

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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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

The following observations demonstrated how children's learning development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service and how appropriate and suitable care practices were in place:

Nutritious food was served to children regularly throughout the day as outlined on the menu to include breakfast, dinner, evening tea and two snacks. On the day of inspection children ate fruit for morning snack and spaghetti with mincemeat for dinner. Drinking water was served at mealtimes and available throughout the day. The atmosphere at mealtimes was relaxed and adults sat and chatted with the children.

Staff supported children to transition through the daily routine and their play activities through clear communication and playful language. For example, at tidy up time, staff used words of encouragement and praise, tidied away toys, and used a visual routine and dedicated music. In preparation for going outside, staff helped children with their coats and children who were ready looked at books as they waited for their peers. Transitions were calm and relaxed, and the children appeared familiar and content within the routine.

A child centred approach was evident where children were cared for individually within the group. Staff were knowledgeable of children's home lives, likes, dislikes, and dispositions, which were also documented in children's files. For example, a child's actions were recognised and celebrated to encourage the child to join a dancing and music activity. Children were also afforded freedom of choice as a child was playing with sand while the larger group were engaged in another activity. Additionally, a child who became upset was comforted physically and with kind words.

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The relationships around children were supported which supports a sense of belonging and wellbeing for children. For example, during nappy changing staff chatted with children about their families and home life. Staff confirmed that feedback about children's food, nappy changing and activities is provided every day through discussion and through a digital app. Children are reflected in the environment through displays of their artwork, photographs of children and staff participating in celebrations, photographs of children's families, birthdays, and individual coat hooks and cubbies.

The environments were laid out and appropriately resourced with materials and equipment to support children's play and activities. Children were observed playing in their social groups with small world toys, cubes, bricks, cars, magnets, and painting. Children from both rooms spent time outside in the morning and afternoon on the day of inspection in line with the garden schedule on display. When outside children engaged with sand, a slide, a playhouse and with a selection of wheeled toys. Planting boxes, a play kitchen, and a bench were also available.

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

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children and provide a safe environment, as evidenced by observation of practice, a review of the environment, documentation, and through discussion with staff:

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service and the outdoor area were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised entry.
- Low windows were made safe to prevent children from exiting and had visibility strips to prevent a child running into glass.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing was facilitated through warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. Handwashing posters provided visual prompts at child level. Children were observed washing their hands before eating,

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after returning from outside and after using the toilet. Adults were observed washing hands after cleaning children's noses.

- Tissues were available to children at their level.
- Staff followed nappy changing procedures as displayed.
- The rooms, equipment and materials, and sanitary areas were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The practices observed around infection control were supported by an infection control policy, written procedures and updated cleaning sheets.

Administration of Medication:

- Medicines were stored in the office and kept within expiry dates and in original containers.
- Staff were familiar with the procedures in the service's medication policy if a child becomes unwell.
- Medication administration forms were completed in full.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were facilitated to sleep in appropriate cots and stackable beds.
- Children's outer clothing was removed before sleeping and the room was maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- Staff were observed conducting physical checks on sleeping children. Staff were found to be knowledgeable monitoring and recording children's breathing, colour, and position as per the national guidelines.
- Children's comfort items were kept away from their faces while they were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were clear from obstruction and staff were consistent in their familiarity with evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency, in line with service's procedures that were displayed and the location of the fire assembly point.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

1. The procedures in the service's medication policy were not followed in relation to a specific medication held by the service for one child. The medication was not labelled with the child's name and there was no written record of instructions on dosage or parental consent to administer the medication in the event of the child requiring it. A risk of harm to children is posed if medication is administered incorrectly.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

The registered provider stated that the medication bottle was removed from the service immediately and that the medication policy was updated to include the creation of a form for written parental consent for when long term medication needs to be administered to a child.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the responses and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 were adequately addressed.