

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024LK003
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Name of Service:	Little Buddies Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Scoil Mathair De, Convent Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 XY93
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Name of Registered Provider:	Clara Daly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Little Buddies operates as a sessional preschool service, situated within Scoil Máthair Dé, National School in Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. The service operates from 9:20 am to 12:20 pm, Monday through Friday, and remains open for 38 weeks of the year. It can cater for a maximum of 22 preschool children at any given time. The facility utilises a large, well-resourced preschool room inside the primary school building. Additionally, an outdoor play area is located at the side of the premises and is used exclusively by the preschool children.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service and has employed 2 staff members to work each day at the facility. Both staff members have completed their studies and have the relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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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*

(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.*

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(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 registered provider had appointed a designated person in charge to oversee the operating of the service. There was a named person available to deputise if needed.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that at all times, a designated person in charge was always available.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for 1 new staff member who had taken up employment at the service since it was last inspected.

(b) Both references were from past employers and references from other reputable sources were not required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána was available for the new staff member employed at the facility. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for the designated person in charge.

(4) Both staff working at the facility held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at the service.
- (3) On the day of the inspection there were 8 preschool children present with 2 adult. The adult child ratio was correct.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The service ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
 - (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility was 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) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A record of this was also provided to parents when children were enrolled.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
 - (i) Details of staff rosters on a daily basis.
 - (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
 - (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

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:

A healthy eating policy was maintained within the service, and nutritious food options were provided daily during snack time. Children regularly assisted staff with the preparation and service of food for their break. The menu featured a variety of choices including homemade scones, sandwiches, fruits, yogurts, crackers, and hummus. All perishable items were stored in a refrigerator each morning until needed for mealtime.

The children had unrestricted access to toilet facilities located next to the preschool room. Handwashing stations were equipped with hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels. Staff were able to supervise the children easily as

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they accessed the bathrooms independently. Additionally, a washbasin was available directly within the preschool room for convenience. Spare clothing was kept on hand for all children, and protective gear was provided for use during messy play or outdoor activities in wet weather.

Tissues and wipes remained within reach of the children at all times, and waste was managed appropriately using lidded bins. A relaxation area was established featuring a large comfortable couch, soft cushions, throws, and blankets for children who required rest. Furthermore, children spent time outdoors daily in an enclosed garden area situated immediately adjacent to the preschool room.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated from a large, carefully designed classroom. This space featured a variety of well-resourced, developmentally appropriate interest areas, including a construction zone, a home corner for imaginative play, and a relaxation area equipped with a large soft couch for reading and relaxation. Children enjoyed constant access to an extensive range of art materials and sensory toys easily accessible in large tuff trays. Low-level tables and chairs were utilised for dining during breaks and for various tabletop activities throughout the day. Play equipment and materials were systematically organised on open, low-level shelving to ensure they remained visible and easily reachable for the children.

Individual storage areas were provided for each child, which helped maintain an orderly environment for their personal belongings. Information was shared with parents via large notice boards located in the main school corridor. The walls of the preschool room featured educational posters and colourful charts positioned at the children's eye level to encourage engagement. Additionally, a birthday display and various pieces of the children's own artwork were prominently showcased around the room.

The outdoor play area offered ample space for active physical engagement. The garden was kept safe and secure by fully enclosed fencing. Children had access to a wide range of age-appropriate outdoor play materials, and indoor toys were frequently moved outside when the weather permitted. Furthermore, a sheltered area within the school playground was available for use occasionally.

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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 a staff member working at the service that had the required first aid responder training completed.

A second staff member was available with a paediatric first aid course done. All certificates were in date.

(2)(a) A first aid box stocked with all the necessary materials was stored in an easily accessible location in the preschool.

(b) The first aid box was at all times available to the children at 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

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(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) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 9th of March 2026.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment was available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed in November 2025. All smoke alarms were serviced on the 21st of April 2026.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for a maximum of 22 preschool children to attend the service for a sessional preschool service.