

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024MN001
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Name of Service:	Laurelhill Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Laurelhill, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A75 PK46
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Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Trehy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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

Laurel Hill Community Childcare has been operating as a community run childcare service since 2024. The service provides a full daycare service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 8am -5:30pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from a building in the grounds of a local primary school in Castleblayney Co. Monaghan. The service currently has 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a sectioned off kitchen area. The children have access to an outdoor area directly outside the room and also school play areas onsite.

Staffing

There were 9 staff employed in the service. There were:

- Five staff who worked directly with the preschool children, 2 of whom also worked with the school aged children.
- Three staff worked with school aged children only.
- One staff member worked as cleaner / catering assistant and in a supernumerary capacity in the care room.

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 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*

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspector arrived and were present throughout the inspection.

All 9 staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection:

(2)(a) and (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references available for 7 members of staff.
- Two members of staff had 1 written and validated reference each.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 9 staff members. The service had adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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(d) International police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction as an adult for a period of 6 months or more.

(4) All of the 5 staff who worked directly with the preschool children held at least a minimum of a Level 5 childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two members of staff required a second written and validated reference.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Both staff members supplied the service with another reference and they have been validated with their source.

The person in charge will ensure that any further employee does not present a reference from the Registered Provider, the Recruitment policy has been updated to reflect this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of references x 2 and copy of updated recruitment policy.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate has reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. These are accepted and the non-compliances 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

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(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) On the day of inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there was 1 room in operation and there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending.
- (2) The adult: child ratio observed in the care room was correct, as there were 3 adults caring for 19 preschool children aged 3 to 5 years of age.
- (8) The registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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;*

Compliance Information

- (1)(h) The details of all children attending the service on the day of inspection were recorded with arrival and departure times on the service electronic application.
- (i) A staff rota was available which specified the hours and days worked by the staff members in the service.

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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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children who were toilet trained and discreet supervision was also provided by staff for those who required assistance. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children.
- Any child who was not toilet trained had their nappy changed in a timely manner.
- All food was provided by the service. As the service were celebrating 'world book day' with a dress up party the morning snack consisted of party food a muffin, a jelly sweet and some juice. Dinners are homemade for those staying on a full day care basis and on the day of inspection consisted of mash, sausages and beans. Assistance was given to the children with cutting up their food. All children were given time to finish their dinner in a relaxed manner.
- Attention was given to personal care with noses cleaned and wet clothes changed. Tissues were available in the care room.
- All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area on a number of occasions going for a walk on the school grounds and to 1 of the playgrounds after dinner. The children were dressed appropriately to go outside.

Supporting Relationships

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in the room. For example, the children were encouraged to "use their inside voices".
- Song singing and bell ringing was used by the staff to assist with getting the children's attention and transitions to sit down for story time. A child who was seeking comfort from a staff member was nursed on their knee during this time.

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- Any child who chose to play with a toy of their choice during this time instead of sitting down was facilitated to do so.
- A key worker system was in operation in the service for the recording of observations and emerging interests of the children.
- Communication with parents was predominantly informally at drop off and collection times and also through use of the electronic application. A phone messaging application was also used which the person in charge reported worked extremely well, particularly for parents for whom English is not their first language.

Non-Compliance Information

The children did not have free access to their drinks in the care room throughout the day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A drink bottle was purchased for each child in our session. They are labelled individually with the child's picture so every child is using their own bottle for the course of the day.

The catering assistant has been asked to wash the bottles each afternoon and refill them first thing each morning so water is available for the children all during their session. The person in charge has added a check of Water Station to the daily room checklist, completed three times daily. Risk assessment checked each week by manager to ensure correct completion.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and copy of daily room checklist.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate has reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting information. The response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

One of the doors in the wooden toy kitchen was in a state of disrepair and hanging down and another door was not closed properly.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The two cabinets that were noted during the inspection were repaired. Both hinges needed tightened and adjusted to allow the doors to close flush with the cabinets.

The room assistant will carry out a daily check of furniture, toys, equipment etc and report any breakages or damage. These notes will then be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. This check has been added to the daily Risk Assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and copy of updated daily risk assessment.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting documentation has been reviewed. The response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed.

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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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. At approximately 11.40am there was no hot water in any of the 5 hot taps accessed by the children. The emersion had not been switched on. This does not allow for effective hand washing and is an infection control risk.
2. At approximately 13.51pm there was no running water from any of the 5 hot water taps accessed by the children in either the care room or sanitary accommodations. This is an infection control risk.
3. The lidded pedal operated bin in the large sanitary / nappy changing accommodation was broken. This is an infection control risk due to multiple touches required when opening the bin.
4. One staff member was observed to come out of the nappy changing area, through the care room and outside to dispose of a soiled nappy while still wearing their disposable gloves used to change the nappy. This is a cross contamination and infection control risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- 1 & 2 Investigations were carried out on the water supply and it was discovered that the water is being fed from the adjoining school. A plumber has fitted a boost pump on the water system which has increased pressure and solved the problem with the hot water supply. When completing the daily room checklist, staff ensuring the water emersion is switched on, it is also checked that pressure is sufficient in the taps. Although the boost pump has solved the problem at the minute it is felt the long term solution is to pressurise the entire water system in both adjoining school and preschool setting. The registered provider has contracted a plumber to carry out this work over the summer period when the primary school will have no students as their water supply will need to be interrupted during works. When completing the daily room checklist, ensuring the water emersion is switched on, a check that pressure is sufficient in the taps is also carried out. If it is not, the manager/person in charge is alerted who is able to operate an instant boost on pump under the sink at our water entry level.
3. The pedal bin was fixed, the bag was placed in the bin over the lid lifting hinge not allowing the pedal to

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operate the lid. The registered provider has however bought a new nappy bin to be used solely for nappies and will retain any odours. The new nappy bin will now be used for nappies, cleaning and emptying of this bin has been added to the cleaning checklist for daily inspection.

4. A staff meeting was called to refresh all staff of certain procedures which must be adhered to in the room daily, one of which is the Nappy Changing Policy. The policy was reviewed and staff had a discussion on the correct nappy changing procedure to include never leaving the bathroom while wearing soiled gloves which is a huge cross contamination and infection control risk. The Nappy Changing Policy has been amended to include never leave bathroom while wearing soiled gloves.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence. Copy of updated nappy changing and hand washing policies. Copy of cleaning checklist.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the registered provider's responses and supporting documentation in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 infection control. The registered provider's response and assurances are accepted, the non-compliances are addressed. These will be for review at the next inspection.

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 ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. Six FAR certificates were reviewed.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available to the preschool children.

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Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was inappropriately used for the storage of a cream used for bruising and also some tablets. This could potentially soil first aid dressings/ plasters and is a health and safety risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The two items have been removed from the first aid box. All items in box were checked for quantity and expiry dates.

This non-compliance was discussed at the recent staff meeting. The staff were reminded that they must keep any medications or creams that are for their own use, stored safely in their bags, hung out in the entrance hall and cannot be brought into the room or left in the first aid box.

Supporting documentation submitted

First aid box check list.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Compliance Information

(c) The care room was adequately heated throughout the day. A room temperature of 20.3° C was recorded at 11.44 am.