

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025CC007
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Name of Service:	Zenith Childcare
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Address of Service:	Bayly Creche, Woodland Drive, Bayly, Douglas, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 YE2V
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Name of Registered Provider:	Charlene Roche
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	48
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue & S O'Brien
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	N/A
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Description of service

Zenith Childcare Bayly is registered to offer full day care for early years children, aged 0 to 6 years. It also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme over 38 weeks of the year, with a daily sessional services from 9.00am to 12.00pm. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, 52 weeks of the year.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises, located in a residential area of Douglas in Cork. There are seven care rooms, with adjoining or adjacent child sanitary facilities. The Preschool room 2 was not in operation on day of inspection. A sleep room is also available, along with a sensory area, a kitchen, a kitchen/staff room and two offices. There is a designated outdoor play space at the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were 21 adults attached to the service. Of these 21 staff, 18 staff work directly with the children including the person in charge, deputy person in charge and early years educators. The registered provider is not service based, however was present on the day of inspection. One student completing work placement was also present on the day of inspection. There is an onsite chef who prepares the meals who is also available as a relief early years educator when required.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, deputy 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.*
- (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 designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises, a named person able to deputise was available.
- (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
- (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge and early years educators.
- (2) 21 adults were attached to the service; all 20 staff files and 1 student file were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 42 references required, 30 validated references were from past employers.
- (b) Of the 42 references required, 12 validated reference was from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 21 adults. 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 deemed to be required for 15 of the adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file.

(3) The registered provider ensured to carry out all checks and validations mentioned in (9) (2) prior to the adults commencing in the service.

(4) All 20 adults working directly with the children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least 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.

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)-

(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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Preschool room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 18 children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years. Six of these children were attending sessional care and 12 children were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 13 children aged between 3 and 5 years. A student completing work placement was also present in this room.

- In the Wobbler 1 room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 7 children aged between 1 year and 2 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 6 children.
- The Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 room were mixed on day of inspection. In the morning, there were 3 staff working with 13 children aged between 2 years and 3 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 4 staff working with 12 children.
- In the Wobbler 3 room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 7 children aged between 1 year and 1 year and 10 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 8 children.
- In the Wobbler 2 room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 9 children aged between 1 year and 1 year and 11 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 4 staff working with 9 children.

(8)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

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)

Basic needs:

- Staff supported children with toileting. Staff encouraged independence and provided support as required. Children's nappies were regularly changed throughout the day at two-hour intervals and as needed.
- Children had access to soft tissues to clean their noses themselves. Staff were observed cleaning children's faces after meals and throughout the day.
- Drink bottles of water were brought in from home, children had access to these bottles at all times and were stored on child height shelving.

- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required. Staff were also observed supporting children with toileting.
- Staff provided support to children that needed help when eating and children were encouraged to be self-sufficient.
- Staff were aware of children's needs. This was observed in Wobbler 3 when a child was tired, and the staff promptly got the child ready for a nap. Some children in Wobbler 1, were settling into the service. Staff showed empathy towards the children who were displaying signs of emotion.
- Individual care plans were available for children who required them. On discussion with the staff in Preschool 1, it was evident that the staff were aware of the needs of the children and adapted activities to ensure all children were included. Staff were observed supporting the children with activities as needed while also giving the children the space for them to learn and develop at their own pace.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff completed individual activities with children. These activities included matching colours and pictures, puzzle making, reading story books and colouring.
- The staff in each of the care rooms were observed to be caring and kind towards the children. Staff used soft tones when speaking with the children and spoke to them at child level.
- Parents and guardians were updated electronically through a mobile childcare application and staff would communicate verbally at drop off and collection times.
- Staff were observant of children's needs and were seen to comfort children when they were upset. This was observed in Wobbler 3 when a child was upset, and a staff member sat with the child and comforted them until they were ready to play.
- Family pictures were displayed in the care rooms. Displays of the children likes and interests were also displayed in Wobbler 1. This promoted a sense of identity and belonging.
- It was observed that there was a sense of teamwork between the staff. Additional staff were available to support staff in the care rooms when needed. This was observed in Wobbler 1, when the staff were getting the children ready for bed.

Physical environment:

- Children were encouraged to engage in a wide range of gross motor skills including jumping, running and bouncing.

- Fine motor skills were encouraged through puzzles, colouring and sorting activities.
- The care rooms were broken into clearly identified areas including construction, role-play, kitchen, and creative corner.
- A rest/quiet area were available in the care rooms consisting of rubber mats, pillows and cushions if children required it.
- The displays in each care room represented the children in attendance. For example, in the preschool room the children artwork was on display from themes that the children had learned about.
- A large outdoor area with astro grass and matting was available to the children. The area promoted self-exploration with mud kitchens, ride on cars and a sand box.

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

A menu was made available to the inspectors which outlined the planned meals for each day. In the morning, children were observed eating yoghurt and fruit. Dinner in Wobbler 1 was pureed vegetables and chicken. Dinner in Wobbler 2, Wobbler 3, Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 was vegetables, rice and pork/chicken. The meals available for children who followed a vegetarian diet consisted of Mediterranean vegetable rice. Some children in Preschool 1 who were attending the service on a sessional basis, had snacks prepared by their parents and guardians. The snack consisted of meat sandwiches, cheese, fruit, crackers and yoghurt. The children brought individual labelled water bottles from home and the service had additional water or milk available for children if required.

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 internal and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Blind cords were securely out of reach of children.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Windows were open which allowed for fresh air circulation.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the refrigerators.
- Water temperatures were recorded in the sanitary facility between 38°C to 43°C.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables and chairs between activities.
- Foot operated bins were available in each room and sanitary facility.
- Children were observed washing their hands after activities such as painting and playdough, before mealtimes and after nappy changing and toileting.

Administration of Medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff demonstrated staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

Safe Sleep:

- The staff in Wobbler 1, were observed to be carrying out regular sleep checks on the children in the designated sleep room. These checks were recorded on the electronic application. The children in this care room were observed to sleep in cots. These cots were observed to be positioned 50cm apart from each other. The room temperature was recorded at 18.1°C which was within the recommended safe sleep temperature range for this age group.

- Floor beds were available for children sleeping in Wobbler 2 and Wobbler 3. Staff remained in the room conducting sleep checks and supervision of the sleeping children. Each floor bed was placed away from doors and heat sources.
- The children in Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 were observed sleeping on stackable beds. All children were aged over 2 years and were observed to be supervised constantly by a member of staff.
- Cellular blankets were available to children throughout the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire equipment was available which included fire extinguishers.
- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by a staff member in each room. On discussion with staff, each staff member was diligent of ensuring the child attendance records were maintained throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The registered provider and deputy person in charge ensured that no person other than a pre-school child, parent or guardian of pre-school child or staff member can enter the service without being approved by an employee.

(b) A daily record in writing was maintained of the entry on the premises of any visitors to the service.

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 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) were at all times immediately available to the children.

(2) The first aid boxes were assessed on day of inspection and were fully stocked.

(a) The first aid boxes were stored up high, out of reach of children and easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid boxes were accessible to staff in the event that a child may require it.