

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025KK001
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Name of Service:	Nurture and Grow
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Address of Service:	27 Fíodh Mór, Abbeylands, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	X91 N2Y2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Aylward
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office, Cork Road, Waterford City
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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

The service operates from a residential property which has been converted to a preschool service at the rear of its sister full-day care service in the Fíodh Mór estate in Ferrybank on the outskirts of Waterford city. The care room is on the first floor of the house with adjacent sanitary facilities. The entrance to the service is through the main building of the full-day care service. Both services share an adjoining rear garden.

The service is registered to provide a part-time care for up to 15 children aged from 2 to 6 years.

The service also offers school-age care on the ground floor of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two staff members to care for the children. The registered provider is not rostered to work directly with the children.

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.

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and Development of Child;

Regulation 17 – Facilities for Rest and Play;
Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials;
Regulation 28 - Insurance.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued on 1 December 2025 regarding a non-compliance identified under Regulation 23, Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. An adequate response was submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate on 2 December 2025, to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliance.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge 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)

(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge; however, they were not on the premises on the day of the inspection. The deputy person in charge was available.

(b) At all times during the inspection, the deputy person in charge was on the premises. The registered provider was available over the phone if required.

(c) The management structure was included in the parental handbook.

(2)

Following a review of information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed three files.

(c) Garda vetting was available for the three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Evidence demonstrated that police vetting was required for one staff member; this was available for the inspector to review.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b) Required validated references were not available for two adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the required verified references are now on files and in the future a more intensive check of new employees' folders will take place.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required validated references was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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)(2) There were 2 staff working directly with the 12 children on the day of inspection. On a review of the documents available, the registered provider demonstrated adherence to required staff levels.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Non-Compliance Information

The parental handbook, which included details of the sister service, had not been updated since 2021 and did not reflect the additional part-time service offered since September 2025 from the new premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that they have updated the parent handbook to include this service and they have included all new staff and their positions. Moving forward they stated they will endeavour to ensure the parent handbooks will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, on a yearly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated handbook was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

Over the course of the morning, the interactions between the staff and children were warm and friendly. Children were observed to be familiar and chatty with the staff. In turn, staff were responsive to the children, engaging in two-way conversations. A staff member engaged a child further by saying, 'Why, I didn't know that, tell me what happened?' and the child continued with their story. There was a sense of fun during the interactive story time as the children participated in the actions and the replies to the prompts in the story books.

Children's choice and decision-making were supported throughout the morning. Staff encouraged children to be responsible for their own work, choosing their activity, choosing where to sit and who to sit with. A staff member invited children to choose one of the organised activities and reminded them they could swap whenever they had finished.

A staff member described how daily outdoor play is planned after snack time; however, on the day of the inspection, the weather was very wet. The children confirmed that they go outside 'loads and nearly every day'. The children's sense of belonging was supported with a family wall of photos, and their art was displayed in the room. Children pointed out their work to the inspector and explained how they made the prints.

Children were shown respect during their planned activities. Staff reminded them that the activity time was coming to an end, allowing them to finish up their work in a timely manner. A staff member explained to children that if they had not finished their work to their satisfaction, they could bring it home or put it on the 'high shelf' until after snack time.

Staff described how, during circle time, they discuss the plans for the coming weeks with the children, and as a group, they pick a theme. For example, the previous month (November), the children picked the theme of 'Fire Engines' as they had seen bonfires over the Halloween break. The staff then work on planning activities related to the theme and plans for the coming month.

Children were spoken to positively, and staff used praise and encouragement during the morning. A staff member was heard to say, 'You're so good at waiting – so now it's your turn'.

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.

Compliance Information

The service operated from a well-resourced, bright, airy playroom. There was a variety of materials available on low shelving for the children to access if they chose. There was a large floor space for construction toys, dinosaurs, wooden blocks and trucks and a well-resourced library area. The play materials and equipment were organised to be visible and easily accessible by the children on open low-level shelving. There were low-level tables to accommodate children to work in smaller groups and large floor mats for group work. The mat was large enough for several groups of children to play separately.

The home corner had been transformed into Santa's Workshop, with a mail station, hot chocolate stand, and the workshop. This space was decorated with Christmas decorations and accessorised with ribbons, baubles, reindeer paper cups, napkins and Santa hats.

There were three outdoor areas to the rear of the building, which the children shared with the children in the sister service. This space was enclosed by fencing and a wall. The area had a mixture of grass, artificial surfacing and a hard surface. There was a large wooden climbing structure, a tunnel for crawling, tractor tyres for building dens, buddy benches and a variety of wheeled toys available to the children.

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 person in charge stated that the service provided the children's snacks during the day. Children were observed to have been served crackers and sliced fruit, with a drink offered to each child. The person in charge described how additional portions are available to the children if required.

At the time of the inspection, no children were attending with allergies or food preferences; however, staff described how this had been previously catered for.

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 to the building was secured to prevent unauthorised entry or exit.

The staircase was well-lit and covered with non-slip carpets.

The fixtures and fittings were stable with solid bases to prevent them from tipping over.

The kitchenette in the building had a secure half door to prevent children from gaining access to it.

Infection Control:

There was warm water, soap and disposable paper towels to allow for adequate handwashing.

Children were observed being reminded to wash their hands during the course of the morning. After one art activity, a child was asked to rewash their hands as there was still glitter on them. The children were reminded of a previous activity where they learnt all about germs.

Fire Safety:

The person in charge described how the fire drills were carried out monthly.

The evacuation procedures and exit signs were displayed clearly, with the meeting point signposted in the garden.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Staff personal belongings were stored in the children's sanitary area. This posed a risk of cross-infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider stated that all staff are now required to store their personal belongings in the staff room. Staff have been informed of this requirement.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on 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

(2)(a)(b) The first aid kit was stored on the shelf in the room and was available to the staff members if required.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) An immediate action notice was issued on 1 December as the registered provider had not ensured that a person trained in first aid was, at all times, available to the children. An adequate response was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate on 2 December 2025 to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliance

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 1 December 2025 regarding non-compliances identified under this regulation. The registered provider submitted a response to the office of

the Early Years Inspectorate on 2 December 2025 to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliances immediately. The registered provider stated that a staff member from the sister service would work directly with the children until all staff had completed the first aid responder course booked for the following month.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the staff members basic paediatric first aid course.

A copy of the amended roster.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured for 23 children attending on a part-time basis. The expiry date was 27 March 2026