

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025MN002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Green Giants Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Demense, Castleshane, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 WP71
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nicole Mc Nally
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	12
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Little Green Giants Childcare is a privately operated service located in Co Monaghan. The service operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, catering for a maximum of 33 children aged 0 to 3 years. The service operates from converted premises using the ground floor only. There are two care rooms named the Nursery and the Toddler room. An office, a kitchen, a sleep room and sanitary accommodations are also provided. An outdoor play area is located to the side of the building. Car parking is provided at the front of the premises.

### Staffing

The service employs 7 staff. This includes the registered provider who works in the service alongside 6 childcare staff.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child.

However, on inspection, a non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations in this report.

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, 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.

(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, who is the registered provider, and two named persons to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 7 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 7 adults.

A total of 12 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 2 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 7 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for 7 staff demonstrated that 1 adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 1 staff member was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 7 staff employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, 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) On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance.

Three adults cared for 5 children aged 11 months to 1 year 4 months in the Nursery Room, of whom all attended on a part-time or full-day care basis.

Three adults cared for 8 children aged 1 year 2 months to 2 years 8 months in the Toddler Room, of whom 1 attended on a sessional basis, and 7 attended on a part-time or full-day care basis.

In addition to the above, the registered provider worked in the kitchen preparing meals and was available to help in the care rooms if needed.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

### 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

(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 examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

##### Basic Needs

The children were observed to enjoy their morning snack time in a relaxed manner, and the staff used this time to engage in conversations with the children. The children in the nursery sat in high chairs for snack and meal times, and the children in the Toddler room sat at suitable low tables and low-level chairs. The children all wore bibs at meal times. Cereals are provided for breakfast up to 9.30am. A morning snack of yoghurt and fruit was served at 10.30 am. The hot meal of chilli con carne or pasta bolognese was served between 1.30/2 pm. A further evening snack of pancakes was scheduled for 3.30/4pm. The children's drinks were available in their care rooms throughout the day, and children in the Toddler room were seen to request their own drink bottles for a drink during play time. Food options are adjusted where required for children with specific dietary requirements.

The children had their nappies changed in line with their individual routines, and staff were observed to engage in conversations with the children at this time. Children's appearances were cared for, such as , staff promptly cleaned children's noses where required, and dribble bibs were replaced when wet. Children's soothers were stored in the service and kept in individually labelled containers.

Child-led sleep practices were observed in place in the Nursery room on the day of inspection. The children were placed to sleep in line with their own individual routines at various times throughout the day. The staff advised the inspector that they are aware of each child's needs and watched for certain cues which demonstrated the children were ready to be placed to sleep.

The children in the Toddler room had a sleep before their dinner in the care room. The room was set up with beds, and two Toddler room staff were observed to supervise sleep times and provide comfort to children when needed.

Rest areas available in the care rooms included soft child-sized sofas, play mats and cushions, which provided areas for children to take time out and rest from their busy day.

### Supporting Relationships

The care rooms were warm and inviting. The staff were observed to sit with the children and were observed to engage in the children's play and learning experiences. The children appeared familiar with those who cared for them, and older children actively sought out staff for support when needed.

The staff team were observed to work well together, and transitions throughout the inspection were observed to be smooth. The staff used gentle encouragement for children to share and take turns with toys.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes and by following the individual care plans for the children. The staff were observed to treat each child with respect and demonstrated familiarity with the children's families through discussions about a child's baby brother at home, and a relative travelling home to visit for Christmas.

The staff were observed to communicate using soft, gentle tones while interacting with the children, positive praise and comments such as "*good boy, all done, and well done*" were overheard during staff and child interactions.

Communication with parents and carers is in person at arrival and collection, and a written daily record is sent home with each child daily to include details such as the child's sleeping pattern, food times, nappy changes and any reminders, for example, Santa's visit the following day.

### Physical And Material Environment

Both of the care rooms were comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance. The rooms were arranged into various interest areas. The play equipment available to the children provided a range of enriching learning experiences. Interest areas over both care rooms included play kitchens, shop areas, wooden cars, a wooden house, construction areas, book area, table top toys, floor play materials, small world toys, and sensory play materials in the Toddler room, to include playdough and shredded paper. Space for young babies to engage in floor play and spacious areas for them to learn to crawl and shuffle was provided. The Nursery room had numerous musical, building, stacking, rolling and pushing toys arranged on floor mats for children's use. Small sensory bottles suitable for the babies to hold, stacking blocks, sand play, and ball play were popular with the babies in the Nursery room.

Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low-level shelves, which were positioned at the children's level, suitable for both care room ages, nurturing the children's independence to retrieve toys of their choice. There were displays of children's artwork on the walls to include recent Christmas paintings. Family photos and birthday charts were also on display. The table and chairs provided in both care rooms were suitable for the numbers and ages of children in attendance. Seats for the adults to comfort younger children were provided in both care rooms.

The outdoor play area was secured by fencing and lockable gates. A play kitchen, children's seats, a play BBQ, ride-on on and push-along toys and sensory play materials such as a sand and water tray were also provided.

### Programme of Activities

Evidence of an emerging curriculum was noted in each care room. Displays on the wall included children's current interests and comments during play. The children in the Toddler room were observed to enjoy sensory play time to include playdough and shredded paper with animals. The children were also observed to enjoy their own self-led play, which included looking at books and playing with dolls and cars. The children in the Nursery room engaged consistently in one-to-one play with staff members throughout the day. Activities including rolling a blue ball, building blocks, playing with sensory bottles and playing with the sand tray were enjoyed by the children whilst closely facilitated by the staff.

Participation in play was observed to be child-led, children's choices were respected, and the adults were observed to consistently engage in play activities with the children.

### 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

##### Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were not always implemented in the Toddler room in line with Tusla's safe sleep guidelines for children under 24 months;

- Three children aged under 24 months were placed to sleep on a stackable bed. The stackable bed was not suitable for a child aged under 24 months, in line with Tusla's Early Learning and Care sleep provision guidance for children under 24 months, which requires a floor bed to be fitted with a mattress of at least 6cm in thickness.
- A sleep plan was not in place for the three children aged under 24 months who were not sleeping in cots. This is at variance with the guidelines that state a child can sleep in an approved alternative to a cot, provided it is agreed with parents, and a sleep plan is established and signed.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Safe Sleep:

A total of 6 new contour cocoon mattress pods were purchased to use with any child under 15 months.

Sleep plans have been put in place for any child under 2 years of age. A sleep plan has been created for any child over 15 months who is going to transition from a cot to a floor bed.

We will work on the sleep plan in collaboration with the parent to ensure it is in the best interest of the child. We have updated our sleep policy to ensure it includes the relevant safety precautions when transitioning a child from a cot to a floor bed.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

##### Safe Sleep:

Copy of receipt for 6 floor beds. Updated safe sleep policy. Completed sleep plans for 3 children.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.