

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC182
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Name of Service:	Positive Ideas T/A Highcare Childcare
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Address of Service:	Caislean Drive, Ballincollig, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P31 X304
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Canning
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	18/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	123	PM	79
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy & D. Cotter
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).

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Description of service

Positive Ideas T/A Highcare Childcare is a privately owned service which is registered for children aged 0 to 6 years to provide full day-care, part-time care, sessional care and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 7.30am to 6pm. The service also provides care for school age children within the service. Positive Ideas T/A Highcare Childcare is in a residential setting in Ballincollig, Cork. It operates out of a building complex that was adapted for the purpose of a childcare facility. There are 8 playrooms in the building; Building 1 consists of the Baby room, the Wobbler room, the Toddler room (Ladybirds, Bumblebees and Butterflies). Building 2 consists of the Red room and the Green room for ECCE aged children. Building 3 consists of the Purple room, the Blue room and the Yellow room for ECCE aged children. There is a designated outdoor play area divided into 3 areas provided to the rear of the building. There are 2 dedicated Sleep rooms adjacent to the Baby room and Wobbler room. There is a kitchen, staff room and sanitary accommodation in the premises.

Staffing

There are 29 adults attached to the service including the registered provider who is not service based but visits the premises regularly. On the day of inspection, there were 21 adults working directly with the early years children, both the person in charge and the designated deputy person in charge were office based and an adult who was the services' chef was assigned to the kitchen. There were four staff absent.

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

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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.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN 1161	18/05/2026	Evidence of Police Clearance was not available for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate. A copy of the processed international police clearance was received by the inspectorate on the 29 May 2026.	
Improvement Notice IN 1162	18/05/2026	Evidence of Police Clearance had not been translated for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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Improvement Notice IN 1163	18/05/2026	Evidence of Police Clearance had not been translated for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	
Improvement Notice IN 1164	18/05/2026	Evidence of Police Clearance had not been translated for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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) The registered provider has ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge as well as the deputy person in charge were on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

(2)

There were 29 staff attached to the service and all staff files were assessed.

(a) Thirty eight of the fifty-eight required references were available from a past employer and had been validated.

(b) Twenty of the fifty-eight required references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

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

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 1161 served and Improvement Notices IN 1162, IN 1163 and IN1164 served.

(4) The registered provider did not ensure that each employee working directly with children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. There was no evidence available to demonstrate that two employees working directly with children held the required qualifications or equivalent. Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for 24 staff members and one staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. Neither the registered provider nor the chef required a qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) In her written response, the registered provider stated that this staff member would no longer work with early years children and would work solely in the school aged service attached to this service. The provider stated that qualifications would be checked against the list available on the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) website.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered providers statement is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(4) has been adequately addressed.

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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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

(2)

On the day of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations.

The rooms were in operation as follows:

Morning :

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present
Ladybird Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	9	2	2
Bumblebee Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	11	3	3
Butterfly Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	14	3	3
Green Room	Full Day Care/Sessional	4-5 years	19	2	3

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Red Room	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-5 years	30	3	3
Purple room	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-5 years	10	1	2
Blue Room	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-5 years	14	2	2
Yellow Room	Full Day Care/Sessional	3-4 years	16	2	3

Afternoon:

Room name	Type of Service	Age Range	Number of children present	Number of adults required	Number of adults present
Ladybird Room	Full Day Care	1-2 years	9	2	2
Bumblebee Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	7	2	2
Butterfly Room	Full Day Care	2-3 years	10	1	2
Green Room	Full Day Care	4-5 years	14	2	3
Red Room	Full Day Care	3-5 years	0	0	0
Purple room	Full Day Care	3-5 years	14	2	2
Blue Room	Full Day Care	3-5 years	14	2	2
Yellow Room	Full Day Care	3-4 years	11	1	2

(8)
The registered provider has ensured that there was a minimum of two staff at all times on the premises. This was evidenced through the staff roster and discussion with staff on the day.

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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)

Basic Needs:

- The mealtimes observed were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. The adults were observed sitting with the children and provided assistance as needed.
- The morning snack, provided by the service in the Ladybird room consisted of natural yogurt, banana slices and orange segments with water to drink served in beakers.
- The children sat at the low-level tables on the low- level chairs at the mealtimes observed.
- The children in the ladybird room wore clean and dry feeding bibs at the mealtimes observed.
- Self- help skills were encouraged and promoted as evidenced with children in the green room, cleaning away any leftover food from their plates after the main hot meal was eaten. They placed the crockery and cutlery in a designated container for washing.
- The staff praised and encouraged the children for their efforts.
- The main meal served on the day of inspection was Spaghetti Bolognese. The main meals are cooked in the designated kitchen on site each day by an allocated staff member.
- The meals were delivered to the playrooms, and a designated staff member in the room plated the food, as was observed in the Green room.
- As observed on inspection, there were additional food portions and food options available to the children as needed.
- There were fruit bowls with oranges, apples and bananas observed in the Green room, in the Blue and Red rooms to serve to children during the day.
- The children who had finished eating before others had activities available to them, as was observed in the Green room. There was story time for children, with other children who rested on the bean bags and the rug on the floor in the designated rest area.

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- Water stations with the children's drinks bottles placed on their clearly identified names were provided for the children. The drinks were accessible to them throughout the day, as observed for example in the Purple, Blue and Green rooms.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets with the staff on hand to provide assistance as needed.
- The children using the toilets outside of the playrooms, for example the children attending the Blue, Yellow and Purple playrooms were accompanied to the toilets by a staff member as observed on inspection.
- In conversation with the staff, staff advised that children who required nappy changing were attended to according to their needs and at regular times.
- The staff enabled, supported and encouraged children with the various play activities they took part in as observed on inspection. These included for example, story time "There is a dragon in your Book" and painting, colouring in the Butterfly , and in the Purple room, playing with playdough using rollers, shape cutters and a colouring activity.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Each of the playrooms and the outdoor play areas had adequate space for the children to move about freely.
- The toys and play materials supplied were stored on low level open shelving in the rooms. This supported children to readily and independently access them, offering continuous choice.
- Rest areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate children to rest/relax or opt out of an activity. The areas were furnished with low level soft seating, cushions and matting.
- The playrooms were bright, colourfully decorated with a selection of the children's artwork for example and the rooms were well ventilated by means of the open windows.

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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.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The emergency doors observed on inspection were unobstructed.
- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- The external doors were secured to restrict unauthorised access in.
- Cleaning agents observed on inspection were stored out of the reach of the children.
- The blind cords observed were secured.
- There were suitable handrails observed on the adequately lit staircases.

Infection Control:

- The children's toiletries were noted to be individually labelled.
- The sinks observed in use by the adults and children had a supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- The nappy changing areas observed in use were equipped with clean and intact nappy changing mats with the surrounding areas maintained in a clean condition.
- There were lidded, sealed and foot operated lidded bins in use for the hygienic disposal of nappies provided at the nappy changing stations.
- The linen used for the cots observed on inspection was noted to be clean, dry and individual to each child.
- In conversation with the staff, the inspector was informed that laundering of the linen is done on site, at the end of each week and as needed in between.
- There were protective waterproof covers for the cot mattresses available for use.
- In conversation with the staff, nappy changing was carried in a hygienic manner to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- Children were observed to wash their hands with assistance provided by the staff, for example after painting activities and after using the toilet.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspector observed the staff conducted physical sleep checks on the children who slept in the sleep room in the Ladybird room for example during the inspection.

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- The inspector reviewed the electronic sleep records that demonstrated that the children's breathing, colour and position were assessed at 10-minute intervals.
- In conversation, the staff in the Ladybird room they stated that a staff member remains in the sleep room until children have settled to sleep.
- On inspection the cots in the sleep rooms used were noted to have the required 50cm spacing between each.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The doors of a storage unit in the outdoor play area were not secured to prevent children accessing items such as tins of paint and tools posing a risk of injury to children.
2. There were two allocated adult toilets that were unsecured and accessible to the children in the building with the Green and Red rooms were located. In one toilet, there was a bottle of cream cleanser on the floor and in the second toilet there were 2 containers of cleaning agents with pump action dispensers stored on the floor, all posing a risk of injury.
3. Staff bags were stored on the floor in the Green room posing a risk of injury to children.
4. The following were accessible to children posing a risk of injury:
 - Plastic bags and rolls of plastic aprons stored in an unsecured low-level press under the high-level sink in the Green room
 - a number of plastic bags that were hanging on the low-level individual coat hooks in the hall area located in the building where the Green and Red, Blue, Yellow and Purple rooms were located.
5. A tall open shelving unit was not anchored securely to the wall posing a risk of injury to children in the Green room.
6. The door on the cupboard of a wall mounted heating unit, associated pipes and cables in the children's sanitary accommodation serving the Blue, Yellow and Purple playrooms was not secure, posing a risk of injury to children.
7. There were loose cables accessible to children in the Yellow room posing a risk of injury to children.
8. The office door in the building with the Blue, Yellow and Purple rooms was unsecured. There were items such as for example, broken toys, a printer and a wall mounted Hoover with a loose cable attached posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

9. The base of four of the six cots in the sleep rooms serving the Ladybirds room posing a risk of cross infection to children sleeping in the cots.
10. The surface of two low level tables used by the children on inspection, in the Yellow room were showing signs of wear and tear. This impacted on the ability to clean the surfaces adequately to reduce the risk of cross infection.
11. The pedal bin in the single children's toilet in the building with the Blue, Yellow and Purple rooms was broken, posing a risk of cross infection.
12. There was a lidded bin non pedal operated bin observed in use in the children's toilets serving the Red and Blue rooms, posing a risk of cross infection when the children touch the lid of the bin with each use.
13. The mechanical wall vent in the children's toilets serving the Red and Blue rooms was dusty, posing a risk of poor ventilation posing a risk of cross infection.
14. The inspector observed a staff member cleaned a child's nose whilst wearing disposable gloves. The used tissues and gloves were disposed of in the pedal bin provided, the staff member did not wash their hands after this posing a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The existing shed was replaced with 2 new storage containers. There are daily, weekly and monthly checks of all areas of the setting
2. All the cleaning supplies have been removed and stored in a secured and locked cabinet. The cleaning agents will always be returned to a locked cabinet out of the reach of the children.
3. The bags have been removed from the room; a new storage unit has been placed in the hallway. The service will ensure that storage is always available for all staff belongings.
4. All plastic bags have been removed from the children's hooks. Child safety locks have been installed on all cupboards in every room. The service will ensure that all staff are aware that any plastics need to be stored out of reach of the children or in a locked cupboard. No plastic bags will be used to store spare clothes.
5. The unit has been removed until a replacement is found, and it will be anchored securely to the wall. Checks on a daily, weekly and monthly basis of all areas in the setting will take place by management to ensure all units are anchored securely.

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6. A child safety lock has been installed.
7. All the loose cables have been tidied and secured. The staff have been reminded to not have cables hand loose within the children's reach.
8. A lock has been ordered for the door and the hazards have been removed.

Infection Control:

9. All the cots have been cleaned and repainted. Management will conduct daily/weekly/monthly checks of all areas of the setting.
10. Replacement tables have been ordered.
11. A replacement pedal bin has been ordered.
12. A replacement pedal bin has been ordered.
13. The vent was removed and cleaned. These are now included on the monthly list for the cleaners.
14. The staff member was reminded of the hand hygiene protocol. Regular reminders with staff regarding hand hygiene will take place.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A photograph of the 2 new storage containers in place in the outdoor area.
2. A photograph of the child safety lock fixed to the cabinet.
3. A photograph of the new storage unit installed in the hallway.
4. The statement is accepted as evidence.
5. The statement is accepted as evidence.
6. A photograph of the child safety lock in place on the door.
7. A photograph of the cables grouped together with ties.
8. A written confirmation order for 2 sets of door lock bolts.

Infection Control:

9. The statement is accepted as evidence.
 10. A written confirmation order for the replacement tables.
 11. & 12. A written confirmation order for replacement pedal bins.
 13. A photograph clean of wall vents.
- The statement is accepted as evidence.

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Summary Comment

All documentation received was examined. The requirement has been met.

The above will be examined on 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

(2)(a) & (b)

There was a fully equipped first aid box in playrooms inspected, they were stored safely out of reach of children but easily accessible to staff.

Non-Compliance Information

(1).

The registered provider had not ensured that an adult trained in first aid response (FAR) was accessible to the children at all times. There was one staff member with an expired FAR certificate and one staff member with an in date FAR certificate. As evidenced through discussion with staff and through examination of the staff roster, the person with the valid certification was not available for the duration of the opening hours of the service. This posed a risk to children who may require first aid treatment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written response, the registered provider stated that another staff member will complete FAR training in mid-July. The registered provider states that having two staff members trained will ensure a person trained in FAR will be available to the children at all times while the service is operational.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the FAR booking was submitted as evidence.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 25 has not yet been adequately addressed. The registered provider is required to furnish the inspectorate with a copy of the FAR certificate once received.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) Visually the premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The premise was observed to be safe and secure.
- (e) Since the last inspection, an additional adult toilet and wash hand basin was installed.