

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC230
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Name of Service:	Little Miracles Childcare
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Address of Service:	Granary Court, North City Link Road, Lady's Well, Cork
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Eircode:	T23 D789
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Horgan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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).

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Description of service

Little Miracles Childcare offers early years care and education to children on a full-time, part-time and sessional basis. It caters for children aged 1 to 6 years, with registered daily opening hours from 8.00am to 6.00pm. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) is accommodated from 9.00am to 12.00pm daily, over 38 weeks of the year.

The purpose built childcare facility operates from the ground floor of an apartment complex and consists of three care rooms. Child and adult sanitary facilities are available, along with two sleep rooms, a kitchen, a staff room and an office. Two designated outdoor play areas are provided onsite.

Staffing

The early years service employs 14 adults, all of whom are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes the registered provider, who, while mainly office based, is available to provide cover as needed.

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 manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN1888	02/06/2026	On review of the staff roster, it was noted that a member of staff with First Aid Response (FAR) training was not available to the children at all times.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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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) A manager had been appointed to the service and a deputy had been assigned to deputise in her absence.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the manager, it was determined that five new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. These five files were assessed for compliance. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members, whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal, were requested for review.
- (a) There were six written and validated references on file from past employers.
 - (b) The remaining four required references and validations were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the five staff members. Garda vetting in respect of three additional adults had also been renewed. This was in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory

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Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting records were available on file for the four staff members who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as adults.

(4) Each of the five adults had either attained a major award in early childhood care and education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

While it was acknowledged that either the manager or the deputy was available throughout the period of inspection, review of the staff roster indicated that there were periods when neither the person in charge nor the deputy were working at the setting, as required. For example:

- On Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th, Friday 22nd, Wednesday 27th, Thursday 28th and Friday 29th May 2026, the manager and the deputy were not rostered to commence work until 9.00am. Therefore, a person in charge was unavailable between 8.00am and 9.00am on these dates.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written response outlined that the staff rosters were immediately amended to ensure that a designated person in charge is identified and on duty at all times, during the service's operating hours. In addition, a fourth person in charge has been appointed. As a preventive measure, a revised rostering system has been implemented, to ensure continuous management coverage and clear identification of the person in charge.

Management will regularly review rosters to verify compliance and to ensure that a designated person in charge is available at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of recent staff rosters, which demonstrate that a person in charge is on duty at all times.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet regulatory compliance with Regulation 9(b).

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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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children.
- (2) The adult child ratios met the requirements of the regulation.
- During the morning, there were 7 adults working with the 25 children in attendance across the 3 care rooms, who were aged 1 to 4 years.
 - There were 34 children, aged 1 to 4 years present in the afternoon and these children were under the direct care and supervision of 6 adults. The manager was also available to assist and provide break cover in the care rooms, over the course of the day.
- (8)
- (a) There were at least two adults rostered to work at the service, for the duration of the hours of operation.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) A total of 51 children were enrolled at the early years service. A sample of 10 children's registration forms were reviewed and were found to include the requirements listed from (a) through to (i).

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:

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- Meal and snack breaks were facilitated for the children at regular intervals throughout the day; during the inspection, a mid-morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack were observed to be accommodated. It was also noted that second helpings were offered during the lunch meal.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day, should they become thirsty at any stage. In the Toddler and Pre-school rooms, this was accessible to the children at their eye level. In the Wobbler room, the children's reusable water bottles were stored on a shelf, where they could be seen by the children and retrieved as needed by staff members. This was subsequently observed in practice, when the children were offered their drinks, during outdoor play.
- The inspector was advised that nappy changing was attended to at designated intervals and as required. Toilet trained children had access to adjoining sanitary facilities, with adults available nearby to provide support.
- The children were appropriately assisted by the adults, according to their age and stage of development. For example, in the Wobbler room, the children were supported to put on their coats before going outdoors and children in the Toddler room were provided with protective aprons, before beginning a painting activity.
- Cosy areas were evident in all care rooms. This allowed children to have quiet time and space to relax.
- Children in the Wobbler room were accommodated to sleep as needed, with the adjoining sleep room in use at various times throughout the day. Scheduled rest periods were facilitated in the older care rooms, during the afternoon.
- The available space within the care rooms supported the children to explore their environments and to freely engage with materials. Outdoor play was also included as part of the daily programme of activities.

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 children were represented in the care rooms, through photographs of their families, birthday displays and examples of their artwork.
- The indoor environments were suitably resourced with child sized furniture and age-appropriate equipment, which was displayed on low-level shelving and therefore within easy reach for the children. Examples included:

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- jigsaws, connectable shapes and dressing frames.
- building blocks and plastic bricks.
- train sets and hand-held vehicles.
- play kitchens, dolls and action figures.
- a variety of books.
- The outdoor play area adjoining the Wobbler room featured equipment such as ride on toys, fence mounted blackboards, slides, push toys and a playhouse.
- The main outdoor play environment also included ride on toys, blackboards and playhouses, as well as low-level climbing walls, handheld vehicles, a climbing frame and a seating area.

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:

- Entry to the building was gained via a keypad, for staff, or a doorbell for parents and visitors. This minimised the risk of unauthorised access. The door release button on the interior was located at adult height, which reduced the likelihood of a child exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area adjoining the Wobbler room was enclosed by high-level fencing and the secure enclosure in the second outdoor play space consisted of walls and fencing.
- Low-level glass panels on doors were either brightly painted, or were fitted with visibility strips, to reduce the risk of a collision injury.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a manner that was inaccessible to children.

Infection control:

- Children's wash hand basins were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot pedal operated bins. The children were observed to wash their hands after messy play and after having their nappies changed.
- During an observed nappy changing procedure, the adult was noted to wear a disposable apron and gloves, which were disposed of immediately after the nappy change was completed.
- Wall hooks were in use to store the children's bags.
- The cots in both sleep rooms appeared well spaced apart, which reduced the risk of cross infection.

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- Within the sanitary areas, individually labelled storage was in place for the children's toiletries.
- The care rooms were provided with a supply of natural ventilation, through open windows.

Administration of medication:

- It was noted that prescribed medication was in-date, labelled and was safely stored in a location that was inaccessible to children.

Safe sleep:

- A review of the written sleep records indicated that staff members carried out and documented frequent physical checks of sleeping children. The records demonstrated that the children's breathing, colour and position were assessed at 10 minute intervals.
- While in use to accommodate sleeping children, the air temperature of the Wobbler sleep room was recorded within the required range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months. A temperature of 20.1°C was noted.

Fire safety:

- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Illuminated fire exit signage was in place.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

The changing unit in the sanitary facility adjoining the Toddler room was not maintained in a clean condition, which increased the risk of cross infection. An accumulation of dirt and debris was visible on the surface of the changing unit.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

It is acknowledged that on 4 June 2026, a photograph of the changing unit was submitted, which demonstrated that this had been adequately cleaned. In addition, the CAPA response outlined that this issue was addressed immediately with all staff members, who were reminded of the service's cleaning and hygiene procedures. As a preventive measure, a cleaning and monitoring schedule has been introduced for the changing unit. The unit is now cleaned and checked twice daily, with staff required to sign the cleaning record after each check. A second staff member in the room verifies that the changing unit has been cleaned to the required standard. Management will monitor the records regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with hygiene and cleaning procedures.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and a copy of the changing unit cleaning schedule.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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) A first aid box was accessible to the adults in each of the care rooms and adequate supplies were maintained.
 - (b) The first aid kits were consistently available, should they be required for use.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) See statutory notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN1888 served.