

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN012
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Name of Service:	Busy Bees
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Address of Service:	Drumalt, Arvagh, Cavan, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H12 AY66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edel McIntyre
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	18/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna
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

Busy Bees was established in 2002 and is a non-profit childcare service. The service provides sessional, part-time and full-day care to pre-school children from 0 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 8.30 am to 6.15 pm each weekday. The service also provides care to school-aged children. The service is located in a converted school building in Arvagh Co. Cavan. There are 2 playrooms: the Baby Room and the Preschool Room. A sleep room is located off the Baby Room. There are 3 outdoor areas located to the front and side of the service. There is an off-road car park to the side of the building for drop-offs and pick-ups.

Staffing

There are 14 staff employed to work in the service. This includes an office administrator, a cook, two staff on a community employment programme, one relief member of staff and 9 staff who are employed to work directly with the preschool children, which includes one staff member employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision, Regulation 28 Insurance. However, on inspection, an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 Premises.

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

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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
- (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 service manager, and two named persons to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the service manager, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or a named person in charge was 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) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on the inspection

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and through discussion with the manager onsite, it was determined that 2 new staff members had been employed since the last inspection. The references on file for 12 staff were compliant upon the service's last inspection; therefore, they were not reviewed upon this inspection.

(a) (b) Of the 2 new staff files, the following were available;

A total of 3 written and validated references from a previous employer.

A total of 1 written and validated reference from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting for 4 staff reviewed upon the last inspection met regulatory compliance; therefore, they were not reviewed upon this inspection. Eight staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal, and the 2 new staff vetting records were reviewed as follows;

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 2 new staff, and a renewal had been obtained for the 8 members whose vetting was due for renewal.

(d) Employment records of 12 staff employed were reviewed at the services' last inspection, and regulatory compliance was achieved; therefore, they were not reviewed upon this inspection.

A review of the employment history for the 2 newly employed staff demonstrated that one adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting was on file.

(4) Documentary evidence reviewed at the last inspection for 10 childcare staff, and upon this inspection for 2 new childcare staff, confirmed that the 10 staff employed to work directly with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. A qualification for the cook and the office administrator is not required, as they are not employed to work directly with children.

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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) 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 unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- Four adults cared for 16 children aged 3 years 5 months to 5 years 2 months in the Preschool room, 6 of whom attended on a sessional basis and 10 who attended on a part-time or full-day care basis.
- Three adults cared for 13 children aged 11 months to 3 years 3 months in the Baby room, all of whom attended on a part-time or full-day care basis.

In addition to the above, two staff rostered to cover breaks and to work in the afternoon arrived as per the weekly roster at 12.30 pm and 1 pm.

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

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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

(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 were facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Morning snack time and dinner time were observed to be calm and relaxing occasions where staff were observed to sit with children and engage in conversations. Younger children wore bibs at meal times, and independence was encouraged, where older children could feed themselves. Younger babies were placed in highchairs for dinner time and fed by an adult who sat with the babies at their level, encouraging communication skills between the adult and child and also with the children and their peers. Children had their nappies changed in line with their individual care needs, and older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently, with support given to the children who had just recently been toilet trained.

The individual sleep needs of babies and younger children were met and observed on the day when children were placed to sleep in the cot room at times in line with their own daily routine. Rest areas were available in each care room to include soft seating areas for children to rest and relax during their day. Younger babies were observed to sit, crawl and roll on soft-floored areas in the Baby room. Outdoor play was facilitated for the children in both care rooms, and the children were dressed appropriately for the weather on the day of inspection. Individual care plans were in place for children who required additional support.

Supporting Relationships

The children displayed a sense of familiarity with the staff who cared for them. The staff were observed to communicate using soft, gentle tones while interacting with all children. Staff were observed to sit on the floor to play with the babies and younger children and nursed and cuddled children while reading stories.

The staff used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings. Where minor disagreements over toys occurred, staff were prompt in supporting children to come to an agreement and

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encouraged turn-taking and sharing with their friends, with praise given for positive behaviour interactions. The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes, while also recognising the children's individual preferences and choices. Conversations observed between children and staff demonstrated familiarity with the child's home life, for example, chatting with a child about their new baby sister. In the Baby room, children were observed to play happily outdoors and while indoors enjoyed listening to stories, playing with play kitchen materials and cars. The children in the Preschool room enjoyed celebrating their friend's birthday, had some treats and cake and also enjoyed practising for the upcoming preschool graduation.

Methods of communication with parents and carers are through in-person conversations at arrival and collection times. Alongside the use of a digital application and daily books for the children in the Baby room, to include details of the child's sleep, food, and nappy/toileting routine during the day.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor environments were bright and spacious. Materials were laid out into designated interest areas in both care rooms to include rest areas with books, construction areas, creative sections, table top areas, jigsaws and connecting toys, play kitchen with role play materials to include dress up items, dolls and play equipment, small world areas and floor play materials. The Baby room was separated into two areas, with one section designed for younger babies with equipment for them to pull themselves up to stand, and to play on the floor with musical toys, rattles and colourful blocks were also provided in this soft-surfaced area. Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low-level shelves and boxes at children's level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return. Tables, chairs and highchairs were suitable for the age and stage of children in attendance. A display of children's artwork was on the room walls, along with birthday charts and low-level family photos. The outdoor area is split into four areas. One large, grassed area with a wooden climbing structure, and a second concreted area with benches, a new sand tray, a play kitchen, a bubble machine, chalkboards and ride-on toys were taken out from storage and used by the Preschool children. The other two smaller areas used by the Baby room had soft ground surfacing, surrounded by fencing and had small climbing structures, slides, bouncy toys, a music wall and footballs for children to play with.

Programme of Activities

Observations were recorded and documented in children's individual folders, along with creative art pieces, which created a timeline of the child's progress during the year in each of the care rooms. These folders were sent home during the year with comments inserted by parents when they reviewed their child's folder. The observations recorded were used to inform curriculum planning and to develop interest areas within the care rooms. The

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children were encouraged to transition on from activities and snack and meal times when they had finished and were seen to return to play areas of interest when they had finished their dinner.

Children were facilitated to make their own choice on the day of inspection, and staff were observed to stayed close by to support children where needed.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

Upon the inspector's arrival, the main entrance was appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

The play equipment and materials used by the children were maintained in good condition. Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Floor coverings were presented in good condition. Storage areas were inaccessible to the children. Cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach. Fire exits remained clear during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

Warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels and bins were provided for use at each wash hand basin.

Handwashing was observed in practise after children used the toilet and following outdoor play before dinner time. Sanitary areas are ventilated with openable windows or mechanical ventilation. Food items taken in from home were stored in the fridge until snack times. Cleaning schedules were in place, and records were completed to date. The service was maintained in a clean condition throughout. Children's soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes. A mouthed toy box was in use in the Baby room, where toys were removed from play to be washed before returning to the play areas.

Administration of Medication:

Staff outlined the procedures for administering medication. Medication records available for review included completed records detailing the child's name, medication administered, prior parental consent and single entries of when medication was administered, which were signed by staff, a witness and the parent upon collection at the

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end of the child's day. Where children required emergency prescription medication, there was a completed care plan in place where required.

Safe Sleep:

The sleep room, located off the Baby room, had 7 cots available. The bed linen is provided by the service and laundered on site at least once a week. Cellular blankets were provided. Sleep checks were maintained for all sleeping children. Staff used a timer to prompt the sleep checks at a minimum of every 10 minutes. Sleep records detailed the children's name, breathing pattern, skin colour, sleep position, room temperature and staff signature at each 10-minute check. Stackable beds were provided for children aged over 2 years if required. No stackable beds were observed in use on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The fence between the grassed outdoor area and a field at the rear of the premises had a gap between where the two fenced areas met, which posed a potential risk of a child passing through and exiting the outdoor play area.
2. A cord from an internet booster device in a window was unsecured in the Preschool room, which poses a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. For handwashing practises in the Baby room, a staff member advised the inspector that they fill the sink with warm soapy water for a few children to wash their hands at a time, which is not in line with infection control procedures and also poses a cross-contamination risk. Children's hands should be washed in a sink under warm running water.
4. A staff member in the Baby room outlined the procedure for cleaning soothers as follows: they were run under hot water at the end of each day, and sterilised once a week. Soothers are required to be washed in warm, soapy water and sterilised in line with best practise.
5. Two waste bins in both care rooms were not lidded and contained waste items, posing a cross-contamination risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The fence has been repaired, leaving no gap between the two fenced areas. Outdoor areas to be checked daily to ensure no damage has occurred to fencing.

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2. The cord from the internet booster has been secured. Leads and cords to be checked daily to ensure nothing is within reach of the children.

Infection Control:

3. In future, children's hands are only to be washed in the sink using running warm water. Sinks are not to be filled for use of more than one child. This has been discussed with all staff, reminding everyone of the policy regarding handwashing and procedures for infection prevention. Signs are also in place at the handwashing sinks.
4. In future, soothers are to be washed with warm soapy water after use as well as sterilised daily. The procedure for ensuring soothers are washed and sterilised appropriately has been discussed with all staff and a new sign with this procedure is now placed in the room close to the sink and soother storage boxes.
5. We have purchased new non-contact bins for each room, which are now in use. Ensure bins have lids at all times to prevent cross contamination.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the gap in the fence repaired and the internet booster cords secured.

Infection Control:

Copy of handwashing policy and handwashing signs on display. Sign on display outlining the procedure for cleaning soothers.

Summary Comment

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

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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 used written records which detailed each child's arrival and departure time daily.
- (3) (a) The registered provider ensured that only preschool children, a person dropping off or collecting a preschool child, an employee, or an unpaid worker could enter the premises upon the staff's approval.
- (b) A visitor log book is maintained. The inspector was requested to sign in upon arrival.

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 a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Five staff members held in-date FAR training.

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(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each care room and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) A record of the monthly fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 28 April 2026.

(b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 13 October 2025, and the smoke alarms were dated 07 May 2026.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection, the inspector observed the staff members in both care rooms appropriately supervising the children in attendance. In both care rooms, staff members worked well together, ensuring that they were positioned to supervise all children in the care room. Similarly, in the outdoors, staff members positioned themselves strategically to ensure all children were in sight at all times. At mealtimes, staff members sat with the children, offering support while also promoting independence. Independence was encouraged at toilet times for older children, where they were permitted to use the toilet located off the hallway by themselves, while staff were aware of their presence in the sanitary area, and went into the area when required.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 40 pre-school children attending the service on a full-day care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2026 to 27 March 2027.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)
A toilet and nappy changing area located off the Baby room was in use on the day of inspection. A suitable privacy partition was not provided to separate the toilet from the nappy changing unit. A shower curtain was installed since the last inspection to provide privacy however this is unacceptable due to the infection control risk. This non-compliance was found at the last inspection, and the registered provider outlined an action to be taken to address this, however the action was insufficient to prevent reoccurrence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A partition has been put in place in the baby changing area to separate the toilet from the baby changing unit. Ensure privacy for children when toileting/ nappy changing. Also, we are now carrying out specific bathroom times for any toilet-trained children, one of which takes place just before nappy changing time, which will reduce the risk of more than one child being in the area at one time. We aim to ensure where at all possible, only one child is in the area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the newly fitted partition in place.

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Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 29 (e). Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions detailed will be reviewed at the next inspection.