

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY070
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Name of Service:	Sunnyside Day Care
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Address of Service:	225/226, Rosemount, Thurles, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 E2H6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brendan Shanahan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L. McGeeney & A. McNamara
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 0 and 6 years old. The service operates between 7.45am and 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children. The session operates between 9am and 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from a detached two-storey building in a residential housing estate in the town of Thurles in north Tipperary. The service is located on the ground floor of the premises. The first floor does not form part of the service and consists of residential units. The service has an entrance lobby, office/kitchenette, sleep room, sanitary accommodation areas and four activity rooms. The back of the premises provides an enclosed area for outdoor play.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service but works there out of hours to maintain the premises. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are a total of nine staff employed in the service to work directly with the children. Relief staff are called in if required to ensure that the adult to child ratios are maintained. On the day of inspection two relief staff were present.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,
Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) (3)(b)(c) Records in relation to a pre-school child,
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First aid
Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b)(4) Fire safety
Regulation 2 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 deputy manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection. There was a named person who could deputise for her as required.

(b) A review of the staff attendance register and rosters demonstrated that the designated person in charge or her deputy were present in the service while it was in operation.

2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that of the eight regular staff and two relief staff employed in the service, all regular staff members were employed at the time of the previous inspection in June 2025. The staff files of the two members of relief staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working in the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.
- (c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed for all except one member of staff, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. The non-compliance has been reported under Regulation 23, Safety.
- (d) Police vetting documentation was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.
- (4) Staff employed to work with the pre-school children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 7 staff present on the day of inspection working directly with 37 children aged between 1 and 5 years old.
- (2) The children and staff were divided between the four rooms as follows:
- Baby room: Five children aged between 1 and 2 years old and four children aged between 2 and 3 years old were cared for by two staff.
- Toddler room: Five children aged between 2 and 3 years old and six children aged between 3 and 4 years old were cared for by two staff.
- ECCE room 1: Nine children aged between 3 and 5 years old were cared for by one staff.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

ECCE room 2: One child aged 2 years old and six children aged between 4 and 5 years old were cared for by two staff.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3)(b) The registration forms were stored in each activity room enabling staff to access them as required.
- (c) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children brought their own meals and snacks with them each day. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge in the kitchenette. Staff reheated cooked meals to be eaten at dinner time in the microwave in the kitchenette.

The service had a supply of snack foods such as crackers and rice cakes to give the children if they were still hungry when they had finished eating the food they brought with them.

On the day of inspection the children's morning snacks included sandwiches, fromage frais, fruit, smoothies, cheese, crackers, rice cakes, sausage rolls, carrot and cucumber sticks.

Mealtimes were scheduled at regular times: morning snack was eaten at 10am, dinner at 12pm and afternoon snack at 2pm.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Each child had their own drinking bottle or cup which was refilled with water as required.

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 front door was open to allow the children, parents, staff and visitors to access the entrance lobby. Passage beyond this point into the service was controlled by a secured glass partition and door which was controlled by an electronic locking system. Staff could see who was seeking admission before opening the door to them. The door prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised and prevented any unauthorised access to the service. The children did not have access to the kitchenette.

The outdoor play area was enclosed and the passageways at either side of the premises that lead from the outdoor area to the front of the premises were secured with lockable gates.

Infection control:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The service had an infection prevention and control policy. There was hot and cold running water available at the hand-washing sinks in the sanitary accommodation areas and in some of the activity rooms. Liquid soap and paper towels were available to facilitate hygienic hand washing. Staff and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before eating and after using the toilet.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Parental consent was sought prior to any medication being given to a child in the service. None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of inspection.

Safe sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Children were monitored while they slept and a record was maintained of sleep checks which were carried out at 10-minute intervals.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.

There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within the service.

Firefighting equipment was present in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Garda vetting for one member of staff was more than three years old and did not comply with the requirement to re-vet staff on a three-yearly basis.
2. A wooden and perspex easel in the outdoor area was broken on one side which meant it was no longer able to stand. This piece of equipment was heavy and was leaning against one of the playhouses. It was a potential risk of injury to the children if one got behind it and pushed it over.
3. There was a hose pipe protruding from the ground in a section of the outdoor play area. This posed a potential hazard to the children.
4. The soft fall mats used in a section of the outdoor play area were not all laid edge to edge causing a potential tripping hazard.

Infection control:

5. There were holes in the doors in the sanitary accommodation area left by the removal of previous handles. This meant the chipboard interior of the doors was exposed to dirt and moisture and could not be effectively cleaned.

6. The liquid soap dispenser in one of the children's sanitary accommodation areas was stored on top of the electric hand drier where it was inaccessible to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The staff member's Garda Vetting renewal process was initiated immediately following the inspection. A review of all staff Garda Vetting records was completed. A Garda Vetting monitoring system has been implemented, including a vetting register with renewal dates and reminders six months prior to expiry. The person in charge will review the register monthly to ensure all Garda Vetting is renewed before the three-year deadline.
2. The broken easel was removed from the outdoor play area immediately following the inspection to eliminate any potential risk to children. It has been disposed of. Outdoor equipment will be inspected daily before children access the outdoor area and formally recorded as part of the service's health and safety checks. Any damaged equipment will be removed from use immediately until repaired or replaced. Staff have been reminded of their responsibility to report hazards promptly.
3. The pipe in question is a water pipe and cannot be removed. Daily outdoor safety inspections have been strengthened to identify and address hazards before children access the outdoor environment. The outdoor area will also be included in the monthly health and safety audit to ensure it remains free from trip hazards.
4. The soft fall mats were repositioned immediately so they are securely laid edge to edge, removing the potential tripping hazard. Staff will inspect the positioning of soft fall mats during the daily outdoor safety check and reposition them as required. The condition and placement of the mats will also be reviewed as part of the monthly health and safety audit.

Infection control:

5. The holes were filled. This ensures all surfaces are smooth, washable and suitable for effective cleaning. Any damage affecting infection prevention and control will be recorded, risk assessed and repaired promptly. Monthly environmental audits will monitor compliance.
6. The liquid soap dispenser was relocated immediately to an accessible height beside the sink, ensuring children can independently wash their hands as required. Staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring handwashing facilities remain accessible to children at all times. Daily room checks will include verifying that soap, paper towels and handwashing facilities are fully stocked, functioning and accessible. This will be monitored through regular infection prevention audits.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Evidence that garda vetting was in process was received by the early years inspector via email on 18 June 2026.

The vetting disclosure was also received.

A photo of the works being commenced in the outdoor play area were received by the early years inspector on 16 June 2026.

Infection control:

Photos were received by the early years inspector on 15 June 2026 showing that the holes had been filled.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) There was one member of staff with valid certification in first aid response (FAR) employed in the service.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the kitchenette.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child while attending the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 10 of June 2026 and staff advised that monthly fire drills were completed.
- (b) There was a record available demonstrating that the smoke alarm system was last serviced in January 2026 and the firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 26 of September 2025.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

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,*
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (b) The service appeared to be safe and secure.
- (c) The service was lit by natural light through windows in each activity room and the sleep room, supplemented by electric lighting as required. Internal rooms such as the sanitary accommodation areas were lit by electric ceiling lights and ventilated by mechanical means. All other rooms had openable windows and trickle vents in the walls for natural ventilation. The service was heated by an oil-fired central heating system.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(d) The service had a cleaning policy. Cleaning schedules were displayed on the walls in the sanitary accommodation area and in the rooms. Cleaning tasks were signed off on when completed.

Non-Compliance Information

- (a)
1. There was a mould-like substance on the wall in the Baby room at the point where the front and side walls of the premises met. This was highlighted in previous reports dated 12 October 2022 and 7 August 2024. The issue appeared to have been rectified when reviewed on inspection on the 11 June 2025 but has returned.
 2. There were two areas of damp with a mould-like substance in the ECCE room at the front of the premises, posing a risk of exposure to air-borne spores that may impact health.
- (d)
3. The windowsills in the Baby room were covered with contact paper which was damaged and torn. This meant that the windowsills could not be cleaned effectively. This issue was reported on previous inspections dated 7 August 2024 and 11 June 2025 but was not corrected.
 4. The covers on the mechanical ventilation vents in the sanitary accommodation areas were clogged with dust and did not appear to be cleaned as part of the regular cleaning schedule.
 5. The fabric covers on the sofas in the Baby room and Toddler room were heavily stained and required deep cleaning. Staff said that the covers were washed regularly but regular washing did not remove the stains.
 6. The outdoor play area was not well maintained. There was rubbish and debris all around the oil tank and the fencing used to prevent children from accessing the oil tank was damaged.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The rising damp is caused by the external wall. The building is rented and the matter has been raised with the landlord. An air humidifier is in the room. The mould was removed using an appropriate cleaning product and the wall was inspected to identify the source of the moisture. A daily plan has been implemented to monitor all areas previously affected by damp. Monthly environmental inspections will include checks for signs of damp or mould, with findings documented and actioned immediately. The registered provider has been in contact with the landlord and will ensure that any recurrence is investigated promptly.
2. The ECCE room will be renovated during the summer months and evidence will be submitted via email on completion. Works could not be carried out during the duration of the ECCE programme. An air humidifier is in the room. The mould was removed using an appropriate cleaning product and the wall was inspected to identify the source of the moisture.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

3. New windowsills were installed on the Saturday after the inspection on Thursday. Photo evidence sent. They were replaced with a smooth, washable surface that can be effectively cleaned and disinfected. Weekly checks will include inspection of all washable surfaces to ensure they remain intact and suitable for effective cleaning. Any damaged surfaces will be repaired or replaced promptly and recorded in the maintenance log.
4. The ventilation covers were removed and thoroughly cleaned immediately following the inspection. They have now been returned to a clean condition. The cleaning schedule has been updated to include monthly cleaning of all ventilation covers. The Person in Charge will monitor completion of the cleaning schedule through monthly infection prevention and control audits.
5. The sofa covers have been deep cleaned. Any covers that could not be restored to a clean condition have been removed from use and replaced. New covers have been purchased. Soft furnishings will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain clean and in good condition. Where stains cannot be effectively removed through laundering, items will be replaced. This will be monitored during monthly infection prevention and control inspections.
6. All rubbish and debris surrounding the oil tank were removed immediately. The damaged safety fencing has been repaired/replaced to ensure children cannot access the oil tank area. The outdoor environment was inspected to ensure it was safe for children's use. The outdoor area was power washed and tidied. A weekly outdoor maintenance inspection has been introduced alongside daily visual safety checks. The outdoor environment, including the oil tank enclosure, fencing and surrounding areas, will be inspected for hazards, damage and litter, with all findings recorded and actioned promptly. The registered provider will review the maintenance log monthly to ensure all actions are completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of the new windowsills and redecoration of the Baby room were received by the early years inspector on 15 June 2026.

Photos of the repairs to the ECCE room and of the bark-mulch purchased for the outdoor play area were received on 18 August 2026.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.