

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LK013
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Name of Service:	TLC Childcare
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Address of Service:	Woodfield Grove, Killeline, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V42 X934
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Hester
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	58	PM	70
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins & P Magner
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager

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

TLC Childcare Woodfield is a privately run early years service registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care for children aged from 0-6 years. The service is also registered to provide school aged childcare. The service operates from 07.30 to 17.30 daily.

The service operates from a purpose-built building with a dedicated outdoor space to the rear and balcony outdoor spaces accessible to the upstairs rooms.

Parents/guardians have access to a car park to facilitate the safe drop off and collection of the children.

Staffing

The service employs 32 adults inclusive of the registered provider.

Of the 32 staff, 29 inclusive of the registered provider, provide care to pre-school children.

There were 23 adults present on the day of inspection of which 21, inclusive of the registered provider and the person in charge were working directly with the children.

The additional staff present on the day of inspection were staff working in the kitchen.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises,*

(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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. The registered provider was also onsite to facilitate the inspection process.
- (b) The person in charge or a named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service as verified by review of the roster given to the inspectors on inspection.
- (2)
- Thirty-two adults work in the service, of these seventeen had started working in the service since the last inspection and their staff files were reviewed.
- (a) Of the 34 references required, 27 references were available from past employers, all of which were validated.
- (b) Of the 34 references required, 7 references were available on file from a source other than a past employer.
All seven references were validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for the 17 staff who were assessed for same. The service also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for all staff, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) Of the 15 additional staff that had been employed since the last inspection to work directly with the children, all 15 held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5, a qualification deemed equivalent or a letter from the minister deeming their qualification as appropriate. The remaining two staff that commenced work since the last inspection did not require a qualification as they were not providing care to the pre-school children. These staff were employed in kitchen and school aged care roles.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The vetting procedures inclusive of staff to have Garda and Police vetting and validated references completed prior to staff commencing in the service were not completed for 13 staff. This was not in adherence with the services recruitment policy.

This may pose a risk of staff that may not be appropriately vetted having access to children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) The registered provider has updated their recruitment policy to ensure all staff are fully vetted prior to starting work in the service, previously they started work but did not have access to children until fully vetted.

The registered provider will ensure all staff are vetted prior to commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(3) The updated recruitment policy was received post inspection.

Summary Comment

Following the actions taken by the registered provider post inspection the requirements for this regulation have been met.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were inspected and contained the required information to guide staff in their care practices with children.

1. The policy on infection control.
2. The policy on safe sleep.
3. The recruitment policy.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) All seven pre-school rooms were in operation on the day of inspection. There were adequate staff available to the children in attendance with the deputy person in charge and additional staff providing cover for breaks.
- (2)
- The Baby room: This care room had six children in attendance in the morning and six children in the afternoon. In the morning four children were aged under one year and two children aged over one year. In the afternoon three children were aged under one year and three children aged over one year. The adult child ratios were correct in the care room as observed throughout the day. There were two qualified adults caring for the six children. The adults were also able to seek additional help if needed.
 - The Ducky room: This care room had seven children in attendance in the morning and ten children in attendance in the afternoon. The children were aged from 10 months to one year. The children were being cared for by two adults both morning and afternoon.
 - The Dolphin room: This room had nine children in attendance in the morning and six in the afternoon. The children were aged between one and three years and were being cared for by two adults throughout the day.
 - The Octopus room: There were ten children in attendance in the morning and fourteen children in the afternoon. The children were aged between two and four years. The children were being cared for by two adults throughout the day.
 - The Elephant room: There were eight children in attendance in the morning and twelve children in the afternoon the children were aged between two and four years. There was one adult in the morning and two adults later in the morning and throughout the remainder of the day caring for the children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The Giraffe room: There were ten children attending both morning and afternoon. These children were aged three to four years and were being cared for by two adults throughout the day.
- The Zebra room: This room had eight children all aged over four years attending in the morning being cared for by one adult. In the afternoon there were twelve children in attendance being cared for by two adults.

(8)(a) The roster provided to the inspector by the registered provider identified that a minimum of two staff were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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-
(c) an authorised person.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

A sample of twelve children's records from the Dolphin, Baby, Ducky and Octopus rooms were reviewed,

- (1) The requirements as identified in (1) (a) –(e) above were met in all six records reviewed.
- (3)(c) The children's records as required were made available to the inspector at inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Of the all records reviewed the requirements under (f)- (i) were not available. This included records of illnesses or allergies, whether the child had been immunised or the availability of the GP contact details. Not ensuring this information is available to the staff caring for the children may delay the appropriate care of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider has developed a software process for parents/guardians to complete and update all requirements as set out on (f) –(i) above. The prototype was reviewed and contained all requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The prototype it form was received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met following the corrective and preventive action process.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

- Meals were served to the children at appropriate times with no long periods of time between meals. It was observed that snack was served at 10.18 in the Dolphin room and dinner was served after 12.30. children were allowed to eat at their own pace and when one child in the dolphin room was slower to eat they were allowed finish and were not rushed.
- Water was encouraged throughout the day and where needed refills of water were given. It was a very warm day, and the children were encouraged to drink water often. Water was the only drink offered.
- Room temperatures were assessed in the Baby room and Dolphin room. The Baby room temperature at 09.23 was recorded at 21.3°C and was 21.8°C at 12.15. The Dolphin room was recorded at 23.2°C at 10.03 and 22.4°C at 12.38 with the children wearing minimal clothes and air conditioning in use.
- Children who were toilet trained used the toilets independently, with assistance given to those who needed it. Children in nappies were changed on a routine basis and when needed.
- Children were encouraged and assisted to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day, such as after toileting, on return from outdoor play and before eating.
- Children were observed to rest and relax as desired during the day in the quiet areas. No strenuous play was encouraged due to the heat and in an attempt to keep the children cool. The children attending the Baby room had access to a cot when each child indicated the need for sleep. The children in the Dolphin and Ducky room were put to sleep after their main meal. No child was observed to need sleep before this.
- The children rested and socialised with their friends on the large family sized couches and the children in the Dolphin room were observed to read books and sit together after their dinner and before getting ready for sleep or before their next activity.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement within each room and in the outdoor play area and movement was not observed to be restricted. Self-care skills and supporting children to become independent were

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

evident as children were aware of where to hang their coats and bags. Childrens pictures and names had been placed above the coat hooks to identify each child's personal space.

- The outdoor play space was used at regular intervals throughout the day and supported children's physical development and social interaction.
- The children had suncream applied by the staff or assisted to apply it themselves before going outside.

Outdoor Area

- The children had access to two outdoor play areas, one located on the ground floor and the second a balcony area with direct access from the playrooms on the first floor.
- The ground floor outdoor area had both cement and soft surface areas, and a large selection of play equipment available. The children were observed playing and enjoying the following two large climbing frames with swings and slides, ride on toys, see saws, chalk boards, tyres and balance beams. A large, covered sand box which was divided into two sections which allowed children to play safely in all weather conditions.
- The balcony area on the first floor was safe and secure and surrounded by a high-level fence. The area was shaded by roofing which would allow children to play year-round. There was a large supply of sand and water play stations and benches and tables for the children to sit at.
- Both areas were in use throughout the day during the inspection under supervision of staff present.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Basic Needs

1. The comfort of the children was not met when the soiled clothes of the children were not changed after their meals. Bibs were only used when parents provided them, however additional clothes were available. The soiling from the morning snack remained on the clothes of the children after lunchtime.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has committed to ensuring that the children's clothes are changed when needed and has requested additional clothing changes from parents. Management will continue to review this to ensure adequate supplies of clothes are available to ensure the comfort of the children

Supporting documentation submitted

1. The corrective and preventive actions received from the registered provider are accepted as proof that this non-compliance has been addressed

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been addressed.

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 service had adequate and suitable equipment and play materials for the children to engage and play with both indoors and outdoors. The toys in each of the care rooms were age appropriate. Sensory play equipment of sand and water or in the Baby room of puffed rice was available to the children to engage in sensory play. Tables and chairs in the different rooms were suitable for the different age groups with small low chairs with attachable tables in the Baby room and larger tables and chairs in the remaining care rooms.

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

All food for the children's meals and snacks was supplied by the service.

The mid-morning snack supplied by the service consisted of spaghetti and potato waffles. The staff in the Baby room reported that snack was fruit puree for the children under one year but for the children for the over one year they ate the waffles and spaghetti. Dinner was chicken curry and rice for the children aged over one year and mash potatoes with vegetables and chicken for the children under one year.

Formula feeds were also given to the children in the Baby room as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 internal doors were secure to areas such as the adult toilets and kitchen, and the staff areas were inaccessible to the children.
- External doors were secured to the front of the building by electromagnetic locks.
- The fire exit doors were not blocked by any restrictive opening device.
- The toys and play equipment were suitable for the age group using them. The toys assessed were in good condition and were free from pinch and crush points.
- No baby walkers were observed to be used in the service.
- All flexes and cables observed, appeared to be in good condition and were not loose or hanging down.
- All waste was inaccessible in lidded bins that were pedal operated.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Hot drinks were not consumed near the children, and the staff took their breaks in a staff room.
- The outdoor area was fenced with high walls and no child could gain access to the carpark or road.
- There were no ponds, pits or other hazards noted on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at each sink and used by staff and children for hand washing.
- The nappy changing unit was cleaned after use and signed for on the cleaning sheet.
- Tables were cleaned before and after mealtimes with suitable sanitiser.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were completed every 8-10 minutes with the staff observed to enter the sleep room and physically check the children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The sleep room temperature in the Baby sleep room where children under the age of one year were sleeping was recorded at 19.4°C at 09.23 and at 19.4°C at 12.15 ensuring a safe sleep environment for the children.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- Hand washing for the children was not observed after nappy changing in one of the care rooms. Also the staff were not observed to wash their hands after nappy changing in a different care room and subsequently handled children's equipment. Not ensuring both adults and children's hands are washed frequently especially after nappy changing may increase the risk of contamination and cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The importance of hand washing has been reiterated to all staff. All staff have been advised to re-read the infection control policy. Management have committed to monitoring the hand-washing practices in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- The actions as outlined on the corrective and preventive action form have addressed the requirements.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met following the corrective and preventive action process.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

- (a) The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The main entrance to the service could only be opened on both sides by a swipe card electromagnetic locking system which allowed only staff to let parents/guardians/children and visitors in and out.
- (c) The service has air conditioning units in all care rooms and in the sleep rooms. Nappy changing areas were ventilated via openable windows.
- (d) The service appeared clean and well maintained
- (e) The toilets and nappy changing units were adequate for the number of children attending on the day of inspection.