

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC326
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Name of Service:	Play & Learn Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Bawnmore, Macroom, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P12 HK30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Kelleher
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Play & Learn Pre-School provides education and care to children aged from 2 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional and part-time care service for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 9.30am to 2.30pm each day Monday to Friday.

The premise is located in a rural area in Macroom Co Cork. The service operates from a purpose built detached single storey building. The facility consists of one playroom, adequate children and adult toilets and nappy changing facilities. There is a spacious designated outdoor play area to the rear of the playroom.

Staffing

There were five adults attached to the service on day of inspection. This included the registered provider, person in charge, early years educator and two Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) practitioners.

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

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the

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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 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, 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*

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(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 on the premises on the day of inspection.
 - (b) From review of the roster a person in charge was on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included the person in charge, early years educator and Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) practitioners.
- (2) There were five adults attached to the service; all five adults files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 10 references required, 10 validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Of the 10 references required, no validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all the five adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for one of the five adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the one adult.
- (4) All five adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

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

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the morning there were 4 staff working with 12 children in total, aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years, 6 of these children were attending sessional care only, 6 children attending part-time care. In the afternoon, there were 5 staff working with 6 children in total, aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years.

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster and observation on the day demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) All records in relation to the service 1 (a-i) were inspected, all required information was available through the parents handbook, policies and procedures and staff files.
- (j) A review of all medication administered to a pre-school child from 01 September 2025 to the day of inspection was reviewed, all required information was available.
- (k) A review of accident and injury forms were reviewed from 15 October 2025 to the day of inspection. Two records were available; all required information was available.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

Basic needs:

- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the session.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills such as putting on their own coat and zipping it up. Staff were available to support children if required.
- Parents/guardians provided a mid-morning snack which consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts.
- Children were observed to freely choose when they wanted to eat their snack throughout the day. Children could continue to play if they were not hungry and eat at a different time.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.
- Staff were observant of children's individual needs and would give the children opportunities for movements breaks outdoors and opportunities for sensory play to regulate emotions.

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 ensured there was adequate equipment available for the number of children attending the service. The service had additional toys and materials on the premises. It was observed on day of inspection that the service provides a number of sensory activities including water play, sand play and modelling dough.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General safety:

- The internal and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment assessed appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Blind cords were securely out of reach of children.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables between activities and prior to mealtimes.
- Regular handwashing was observed throughout the day. Staff were observant of handwashing and ensured children's hands were clean from dirt from outdoor play.
- All perishable foods were stored in the refrigerator.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection.
- On discussion with staff on day of inspection, children with allergies had individual care plans available. These care plans were displayed in the room, and all staff were confident in dealing with any emergencies.
- Individual medication for children with allergies was stored onsite, in date and freely accessible by staff and out of reach of children.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

Non-Compliance Information

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Infection control:

1. The bin in the nappy changing facility was not foot operated. Not ensuring a foot operated bin was available for the disposal of the nappies put the staff at risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

The registered provider replaced the bin in the nappy changing facility with a foot operated bin. This will be monitored going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

Photographic evidence was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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 ensured that staff checked in and out each child attending the service. This was completed through the use of the service's mobile application. This was regularly completed throughout the day.

(3)

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- (a) The registered provider ensured that no person other than a child attending the service, the person dropping or collecting the child, staff or unpaid worker can enter the premises without being approved.
- (b) A daily record of persons entering the premises was kept onsite and was available to the inspector.

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 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) were at all times immediately available to the children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a)(b) While first aid kits were present on site, there was no evidence that regular inventory checks of their contents had been completed and as a result an adequate amount of large and extra-large wound dressings and triangular bandages were not available on the day of inspection. The absence of a fully stocked first aid kit in the event of an emergency could delay or compromise the required first aid response to a child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider replaced the number of dressings available in the first aid kit. A monthly checklist was created to ensure the first aid kit will be adequately stocked at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b) has been adequately addressed.