

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CC340

Name of Service: Ready Steady Play

Address of Service: Mahon Point Shopping Centre, Ground Floor, Mahon Point, Cork.

Eircode: T12 V2CD

Name of Registered Provider: Carol Coffey

Service type: Drop-In

Date(s) of Inspection: 08/12/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	2	PM	1
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork. T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter and D Prendergast
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Description of service

Ready Steady Play is a Drop-In service situated on the ground floor at Mahon Point Shopping Centre, Cork. The drop-In service caters for early years children aged between 1 and 6 years and also provides a service for school age children. The service's registered opening hours are between 10am and 16:30pm weekdays, the service also operates during the weekend.

Staffing

There are 5 adults attached to the service of which 4 work directly with the children. The registered provider is not service based.

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.

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.

Additional Information

During the onsite inspection on 8 December 2025, an Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the person in charge in relation to the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25. A response to the IAN was subsequently received on 9 December 2025 and was deemed adequate in mitigating the risk.

Acknowledgments

The inspector(s) wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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 named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
- (b) The deputy was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and the person in charge arrived on the premises at 10.25am and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that 1 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection, therefore 1 staff file was examined.
- (a) There was 1 reference and required validation available on file from past employers in respect of the new staff member.
- (b) There was 1 reference and required validation from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for review in respect of this staff member.
- (d) Through examination of the staff members' curriculum vitae it was assessed that police vetting was not necessary as the staff member had not resided out of the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of the adult that worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) While it was acknowledged that garda vetting had been obtained in respect of the newest staff member, it had not been obtained prior to the person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that their practice has been amended to ensure that no staff member is allowed to begin in employment until Garda vetting is obtained.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (3) has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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.

(6) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 3 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number 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 registered provider has ensured that at all times an adequate number of staff were working with the children attending the service. On the day of inspection there was two children aged 2 years present with two adults.
- (6) The registered provider has ensured that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children for a drop-in service is maintained. Through discussion with staff, it was identified that if additional children arrive, staff members consult with the sign in book and advise parents of a suitable time to return. This practice ensures that a ratio of 1:4 can be maintained at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

- (8)
- (a) The registered provider failed to ensure there were at least two adults on the premises at all times. The inspectors arrived at the service at 10:15am and only one adult was present. This non-compliance was also found at last inspection of the service in April 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that two staff will be rostered on at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated rosters were submitted which showed two staff members are on site at all times.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 (a) has been adequately addressed.

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:

- Drinking water and cups were available for any child who may become thirsty while in attendance.
- The inspector was advised that nappy changing was carried out according to the children's needs. Toilet trained children had access to an adjoining sanitary facility, which they could use as needed.
- The playroom included a comfortable rest area, which provided a quiet space for children to relax. This area was furnished with a soft floor mat, vinyl and cushioned seating and a variety of books.
- Minor disagreements that arose between children were managed calmly by the adults, who intervened appropriately, before such incidents escalated.
- The generously sized playroom ensured that there was ample space for children to move freely, as they played and explored within their environment.

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:

- Cables and flexes were maintained out of reach of the children.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to children.
- All of the examined play materials were in good working order.

Infection control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the children's wash hand basins, to support hygienic handwashing and drying.

- Single use aprons and gloves were available for nappy changing procedures.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clearly signposted.

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.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The inspectors observed staff members signing children in and out of the service.
- (2) The inspectors observed the same staff member checking each child in and out of the service. No more than 12 children can be accommodated at any one time.
- (3) (a) The entry to the care room is secured to ensure unauthorised entry is prevented and
(b) A visitors' book is maintained. The inspectors were asked to sign the visitors log on arrival. This log ensured that a record was kept of anyone other than a child or employee along with the requisite information

(4) Through examination of the visitor's book, it was deemed that the registered provider has ensured that the record is retained for at least one year.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

There was no adult with training in First Aid Response (FAR) on site when the inspectors arrived. It was acknowledged that the person in charge does hold a FAR certificate, however, the rosters demonstrated that there are days when there is no FAR trained adult available to the children. A further two staff members had training in paediatric first aid, but it was not ensured that one of these adults was always on the premises. This non-compliance was also found at last inspection of the service in April 2024. An IAN was issued for safety which was promptly responded to by the person in charge. The response stated that the deputy had been enrolled on a FAR course, and rosters had been amended to ensure that a person who was trained in first aid was always available to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has enrolled another staff member on a FAR course and has ensured that at least one adult with FAR is rostered to be available to children at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the booking confirmation for the FAR course and updated rosters that showed an adult with FAR is onsite at all times were submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(d) A cleaning schedule was in place at the setting.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) One of the toilets in the children's sanitary facility was not maintained in proper working order and required repair. During the opening meeting, the person in charge advised that this toilet was out of order and that repair was awaited. It was subsequently observed that the toilet flush push button was missing from the toilet.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

No response received.

Supporting documentation submitted

None received.

Summary Comment

This regulation remains non-compliant as the registered provider failed to submit a response. This will be reviewed at next inspection.