

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC458
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Name of Service:	Wallaroo Playschool
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Address of Service:	10 Sunmount, Military Hill, Co Cork
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jo Kelley
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	22
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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

Wallaroo Playschool is a community-based service that provides part time and sessional care. It is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. Children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme are facilitated each morning in both playrooms. A school aged care service operates in the playroom on the ground floor each afternoon. Daily opening hours of the early years service is from 8.45am to 2.00pm. Wallaroo Playschool operates from a detached two storey house that has been refurbished with two operational care rooms. A ground floor playroom called the Wallaby's room. The playroom on the first floor is called the Wombats room. Child sanitary facilities are accessible adjoining the care rooms. The premise also includes prefabricated cabins which are located to the side of the building and outdoor play area. The cabins were being used as a combined office and staff area. The outdoor play space is available to the rear side of the building.

Staffing

There were 23 adults associated with the service. This includes 10 adults who work directly with the children, 1 adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIMs), 3 students on work placement and the registered provider who is not service based. The service also employed a financial administrator, two office administrators, two cleaners, and one maintenance worker who were re not involved in the direct care of the early years children. There were two adults that worked with school age care children only where a childcare qualification is not required. A number of the above adults are presently partaking in a community employment scheme including two adults in early years childcare and one adult in school aged care.

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

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on inspection on 21 January 2026 in relation to Regulation 23 General safety as the water temperatures in the children's sanitary facilities exceeded 50°C during the inspection.

A written response was received from the person in charge on 22 January 2026 which mitigated the risk identified.

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.

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.

(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 deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were 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 person in charge, deputy person in charge and childcare practitioners.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that eight new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. On the day of inspection, three students were present on an educational work placement programme, two childcare practitioners, a community employment worker, a cleaner and an office worker were present. A total of eight files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 12 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Of the 16 references required, 12 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 16 references required, 4 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 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 three of the eight new adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the adult.

(3) The registered provider ensured to carry out all checks and validations mentioned in (9) (2) prior to the adults commencing in the service.

(4) The two new adults employed to work directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 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.

(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 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 Wallaby room there was 3 staff working with 17 children, aged between 2 years and 6 months and 5 years, 5 children attending sessional care and 12 attending part-time care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 12 children, aged between 3 years and 5 years. There was also one student, and two CE workers present in the room.
- In the Wombat room there was 3 staff working with 15 children, aged between 3 years and 4 years, 4 children attending sessional care and 11 attending part-time care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 10 children, aged between 3 years and 4 years. There were also two students, and two CE workers present in the room.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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:

- 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.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were asking children if they wanted to participate in cleaning up, children were observed to freely get the dustpan and brush and support staff with clean up after free play.
- During mealtime staff sat at the table and engaged in social conversations with the children.
- Staff explained that the activities are child led, and children voice their interests and staff support their knowledge and learning through songs, activities, games and crafts.
- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.
- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.

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 and materials available for the number of children attending the service. The service had additional toys and materials on the premises.

Some of the materials observed on the day of inspection indoors included puzzles, kitchen set, building blocks, cars, tractors, storybooks and a creativity corner. The outdoor area was spacious with equipment including bikes, slides, playhouses, and sensory activities included tuff trays with sand and leaves and water-play.

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 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.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the main room and sanitary facilities.
- All perishable foods were stored in the refrigerator.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the storage and appropriate practices in relation to medication administration.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Firefighting equipment was available throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

It was identified that the sink in the children's sanitary facilities water temperature exceeded 50°C. The sink temperature was measured at different intervals between 10.50am and 10.55am. Temperatures ranged from 53.6°C to 54.0°C. The person in charge was made aware of this non-compliance and attempted to regulate the temperatures within the service; they also organised for the plumber to come the same day to address the issue. The person in charge addressed the temperatures and lowered the temperatures under 50°C. The temperatures were measured and ranged from 47.3°C to 48.9°C. As the temperature remained over 43°C the staff in the room put measures in place where children used the other sink in the sanitary facility for handwashing until the issue could be resolved. This posed a significant risk of scalding to children using the sink. In response to the Immediate Action Notice, the person in charge organised for a plumber to adjust the sink temperatures to remain under 43°C. This response mitigated the risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The person in charge promptly addressed the water temperatures. A plumber arrived on the day of inspection to rectify the problem. Water regulators were inserted on the downstairs sinks. The person in charge developed a new daily checklist of checking the water temperatures each day and during the sessions. Staff will continue to monitor the water temperature levels going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Photographic evidence of the water thermometers purchased, updated policy on safe handwashing, photographic evidence of the receipt from the plumber was all received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance 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 each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by a staff member in each room. On discussion with staff, each staff member was diligent of ensuring the child attendance records were maintained throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The registered provider and deputy person in charge ensured that no person other than a pre-school child, parent or guardian of pre-school child or staff member can enter the service without being approved by an employee.

(b) A daily record in writing was maintained of the entry on the premises of any visitors to the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (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 premises was secure and safe. The entrance to the service was adequately secured and prevented the unsupervised exit of a child or unauthorised entry of an adult. Regular risk assessments were conducted to ensure the premises remained safe and secure at all times.

(c) The premises were maintained adequately lit throughout the inspection. The premises was well ventilated and heated throughout the inspection.

(d) There were cleaning records displayed across the service, which staff regularly signed, in line with regular cleaning.

(e) The children's and adults' sanitary facilities are maintained in a suitable condition. There were an adequate number of children's and adults' bathrooms and wash hand basins for the number of children attending. Nappy changing facilities were suitable to the age and needs of the children.