

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DL122
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ready Steady Grow Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Glenview Business Park, Donegal Road, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F93 N7FF
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Paula O'Doherty
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	25	PM	19
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Killeen
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Non-Applicable
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### Description of service

Ready Steady Grow Childcare Centre is a privately owned and operated preschool service providing full day, part time and sessional care to children aged 0-6 years. The service is provided between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm each weekday with a sessional preschool from 9.00am-12.00md. The service operates care rooms from the ground floor unit of a double story building within a business park. A third room is located in an adjacent building. Both units have been purposely adapted for the provision of an early year's service.

### Staffing

There were twelve staff members employed to work in the service at the time of inspection. This includes the registered provider who was on site and works directly with the children. Eight other staff members work directly with the children. One staff is employed as an office administrator and the remaining two staff members work in the kitchen and as a cleaner.

### 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 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,17,19,23,26 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part II - Registration and Register

### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

### Non-Compliance Information

- On the day of inspection, the service was found to be operating outside of registration status.
  - The service was operating from 7:45-17.45 there registered hours are 08.00-17.30.  
The Register provider was informed of the requirement to submit a change of circumstances to Tusla registration panel.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

I contacted Tusla registration, and they have issued the centre with a change of hours of operation from 07.45 to 17.45. If times of operation change, I will immediately contact registration.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Application letter to Tusla registration confirming change of times for the service.

#### **Summary Comment**

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence submitted for this regulation, the requirements for this regulation has been met.

### 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.*

*(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge/Deputy was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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. This was evident from conversations with the staff on the day of inspection.

(2)

On the day of inspection, seven adults were present and the register provider, seven adults were employed to work directly with the children.

There were 12 adults who worked directly with the children, 9 vetting files were reviewed the following vetting information.

- (a) Sixteen written validated references from past employers in respect of eight adults.
- (b) Two written validated references from reputable sources for one of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all twelve staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International Police vetting was available for one adult who had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4)

Eight of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (4) It could not be determined if one adult who provided direct care to the pre-school children had achieved the required qualification in early childhood care and education as no certification was available on the day.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Staff members will not commence working directly with children until all necessary information regarding their qualifications has been obtained. The registered provider has confirmed that, prior to any staff member engaging in direct care, either the official qualification certificate or a confirmation letter of recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will be secured.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photograph of certification sent in.

### **Summary Comment**

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence submitted for this regulation, the requirements for this regulation has been met.

## 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)

On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

(8)

The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample review of attendance record

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

#### Compliance Information

The register provider ensured that all parents and guardians who have a child in attendance in the services was provided with the necessary information as demonstrated by the parent handbook. This included:

The Name, position and qualifications of management team to include, register provider, service manager and deputy manager. Ongoing communication with parents was observed with notice board displaying the Service information for the parents when they enter the service. Also available Weekly staff roster, illness guide and child safety statement.

(a) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g)

The type of service provided, the ratios required, type of facilities available, opening hours and policies are displayed on the notice board in the entrance to the service. The service uses application to communicate with the parents daily.

### 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:

- The service promoted healthy eating and food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. Children were observed eating pasta, mince and vegetables, an alternative of chicken casserole was also available for children. The evening snack consisted of tuna, bread, crackers. Lettuce and apples. Young children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to the age and stage of development. Children's drinks were available in the care room on a table within their reach throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.

- Staff members were observed sitting and speaking with children during snack and lunch time and using it as an opportunity to enhance social interaction with the children.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly as observed on three separate occasions on the day of inspection. This was handled in a positive and sensitive manner; staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- Bibs and aprons were available to the children for messy play activities and during mealtimes. Spare clothes were available if the children required a change of clothing during the session.
- The weather on the day of the inspection was very warm, sun cream was applied as required and staff ensured that the children wore sun hats and limited the time the children were exposed to the sun during outdoor play. Children were encouraged to take regular drinks throughout the day.
- The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals. There was a designated sleep room with seven individual cots which was located in the baby room. The staff were observed putting fans in the room to ensure temperature were maintained for the young children.
- Older preschool children were facilitated with rest periods in the afternoon. For children who did not require asleep appropriate quiet rest areas were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in the areas for short periods of rest throughout the day.

### Supporting relationships:

- During meals the staff member sat at the table and engage in social conversations with the children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. Staff were observed sitting at the children's level when feeding the children or assisting the children to feed themselves.
- Staff members demonstrations warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. Staff were observed communicating positively with the younger children using soft and gentle tones. Staff in the baby room we're seeing offering reassurance to one child who became upset by sitting on the floor beside them and offering them reassurance.
- Settling in and transitions were made as smooth as possible within the service. Staff were observed giving children a 5-minute reminder when one activity was due to finish. Staff were observed encouraging children to assist in cleaning up by singing the clean-up song.
- In the play group room staff supported children to engage positively with one another and children were encouraged to engage in play activities that require taking turns and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging one child to be mindful of the feelings of those around them, for example when one child

became upset due to another pushing over his newly constructed tower. Staff reassured the child who was upset and explain to the other child why the child had become upset.

- Staff and parents working partnership within the service as observed on the day of the inspection at drop off and pick up. The staff members were very aware of the children's likes, dislikes, daily interests and family life. Service uses a software technology application to provide information to parents in relation to updates on eating nappy changing activities sleep and sleep checks.

### Physical and material environment:

- The indoor area was laid out to facilitate sensory experiences through arts and crafts with the sand tray. Fine motor development was supported with the use of jigsaws, shape sorters, crayons, and paper to draw on. Gross motor development was supported with ride on toys and climbing equipment and an area to play ball outside.
- There were defined interest areas which were spacious, inviting and well laid out. The areas were significantly resourced offering an adequate range of toys and materials on low level shelving that were freely and readily available to the children. There was a storeroom with additional supplies and materials that the staff stated are rotated on a monthly basis.
- Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children attending the specific rooms.
- The baby room had a small area fenced off with soft mats and wall displays for younger babies. Stable props were available to support the learner walker, and a shatter proof mirror provided additional support to develop visual senses.
- A range of books were available in the reading area which supported children's language and development.
- An adult's armchair was provided in the Baby room to allow adults working with the children to sit and feed, cradle, or comfort the children.
- An enclosed outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor play area. Children were observed engaging in energetic play on ride on bikes and running after each other.

### 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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Highchairs within the baby room were fitted with a 5-point safety harness and were in good sate of repair.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Tables and highchairs were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes in baby room.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available in each of the children's sanitary accommodation to support good hand washing practices. Children were observed washing their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the day including after using the toilet and before eating.
- Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks. Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.
- Aprons and gloves were available and observed in use by staff when changing of a child
- Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary and nappy changing accommodation were available.
- Ventilation in each of the rooms was provided by openable windows. Ventilation in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas was by mechanical ventilation.

### Administration of Medication:

- On discussion with staff on the day of inspection, they were aware of their roles and responsibilities for the safe administration of medication. No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with appropriate cots available to children.
- Sleep checks were observed to occur every ten minutes.
- The Sleep room temperature was recorded at 19.7 °C on the day of inspection, within the acceptable range.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- Although a record of all children in attendance was maintained, it was not consistently updated in real time. The inspector was informed that some children begin their day in the toddler room before transitioning to the preschool room. However, the attendance records in the toddler room were not updated to reflect these movements. As a result, the number of children recorded in the toddler room was higher than the number present. For safety and accountability, it is essential that children are signed in and out of each room as they move, ensuring staff have an accurate and up-to-date list of all children in their care, particularly in the event of an emergency.

#### Infection Control:

- Some of the older children were observed having their nappies changed on a changing mat placed directly on the floor, which could pose a risk of cross-contamination and compromise hygiene standards.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

Changes have been made to the attendance records in each room to improve visibility and clarity for staff. The updated format allows for easier tracking of transitions between rooms, making the process more understandable and efficient. Staff training on the importance of accurate attendance recording has been incorporated into regular team meetings, emphasizing its role in ensuring health and safety.

Although this procedure is outlined in the staff induction file, it was not consistently followed on the day of the inspection. To address this, the manager and deputy manager will now conduct regular checks throughout the day to ensure proper use and compliance with attendance recording procedures

### Infection Control:

The practice of changing a child on the floor was initially introduced to accommodate a larger child for whom the counter was not suitable. However, I acknowledge that I was unaware this method was also being used by some staff for other children who could have been appropriately changed on the provided counter.

To address this, I have included a sketch from a carpenter outlining proposed steps to assist children in accessing the changing counter safely. Unfortunately, due to his current workload, he is unable to complete the project. I have since contacted two additional carpenters, both of whom have committed to arranging a visit to discuss the construction of the steps as soon as their schedules allow. I am aiming to have the steps completed and in use within the next four weeks.

### Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence submitted for this regulation, the requirement for this regulation has been met. Evidence of the action will be submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate on completion and will be reviewed on next inspection.

## 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 fire fighting 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.

### Information

- (1) (a) A written record of fire drills carried out by the service was maintained. The record indicated that fire drills occur regularly with the most recent dated March 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was maintained. The most recent maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was dated April 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

- The register provider demonstrated that adequate insurance was in place for 48 preschool children up until 27/03/2026