

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR032
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Name of Service:	Mounttown Early Years Service
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Address of Service:	Meadowsland Fitzgerald Park, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A96 KR65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Parsons
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien
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

Mounttown Early Years Service was first established in 1996 and is a community not-for-profit service. The childcare service is registered to provide full day-care, part-time care and sessional care to pre-school children aged from 0-6 years. The service's opening hours are 08:30 to 13:45 Monday to Friday. The service operates from Mounttown Community Facility which is located in a residential area of Dun Laoghaire. Three care rooms are provided named the Baby room, the Toddler room and the ECCE room. A purpose-built outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

There are twelve staff employed to work in the service which includes the designated person in charge, a kitchen assistant and an adult employed under the Community Employment Scheme. On the day of inspection there were nine adults present, eight of whom were working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service and was not present on the day of inspection.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment,
Regulation 11 (1)(2) - Staffing levels,
Regulation 15(1) – Record of a Pre-School Child,
Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service,
Regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child,
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 – First Aid,
Regulation 28 – Insurance,

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) Record of a Pre-School Child.

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 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 registered provider is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.
- (b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived at 10:55 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

The files of twelve adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included files of three staff members who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 08 January 2024.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) Of the six validated, written references that were required, five were available from a past employer and one from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for ten staff members. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, in relation to two adults working in the pre-school. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was not required for three staff members as there was no evidence that they had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available demonstrating that all adults employed since the last inspection held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)

The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years' service prior to commencing employment. It is acknowledged that two references were available for one staff member who commenced employment in the service on 31 March 2025, however, one reference was validated on 11 April 2025 after they commenced working in the service and there was no evidence to suggest that the second reference was validated prior to the date of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

While it is recognised that the two references for one employee who commenced employment on the 31 March 2025, with one being verified on the 11 April 2025. The second reference was verified prior to commencement of employment but had been ticked and not signed, which was confirmed by the inspector in the day of inspection. Regarding the untimely confirmation of the first reference, the registered provider has stated that this was unfortunately out of the control of the service. The service had been provided with an email to make contact with this previous employer, had emailed to arrange a phone conversation for the reference check and this took a while to receive a response, which is why it was conducted on the 11 April 2025.

To prevent this issue from re-occurring, the registered provider has compiled a reference check sheet to be used ahead of any prospective employees joining the team.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of reference check sheet to be used in the recruitment of new staff.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform 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.

(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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)
The correct adult to child ratio was maintained at all times on the day of inspection with twenty-nine children being supervised by eight adults.

(8)(a)
The manager ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)–(i)

A sample of ten children's records were reviewed. The records detailed the information as required by the regulation.

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:

- (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)
- (h) Children's attendance was recorded in a hard copy register on the day of inspection. These records included details of each child's arrival and departure times from the service.
- (i) A record of the staff roster was available and was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (k) Three documented accident and incident records since the last inspection were reviewed and all were completed as required by the regulation

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) Four records were reviewed and while it is acknowledged that two records had been completed as required by the regulation, the following information was missing on two of the records:
- In one record, there was no parent signature recorded confirming that they had been informed that anti-febrile medication had been administered.
 - In one record, there was no manager's signature recorded in relation to the medication being administered.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All medicine forms have been checked and completed to ensure that parents have signed both sections of the medicine administration form. The manager has also ensured that they have signed the appropriate section. To prevent this from re-occurring a staff meeting was held on 13 February 2026 with a review of the administering of medicine carried out with all staff, with specific reference to ensuring all appropriate signatures are in place before filing the document.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of team meeting and signatories of staff in attendance relating to training and review on accidents and incidents.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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)(b)

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all snacks are provided by the service for children attending on a part time basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a dinner of chicken curry and rice. Staff advised that alternatives were available. Additional helpings were available on request by children. Drinking water or milk was offered to the children at dinner time in the Baby room. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within the care room.

Children's care needs were observed to be met with nappies changed and faces, noses and hands cleaned. Staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

Supporting Relationships

In the Baby room, staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child's learning and development and how this is shared with parents.

Physical and Material Environment

The Baby room was arranged to provide play materials supporting children with the freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included pull-along toys, musical toys, a rest area, soft mats, books, a home corner and soft balls. The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials.

The environment was laid out to support the children’s independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear of the care room. The outdoor space is directly accessible from the care room. Due to inclement weather on the day of inspection, children were not observed engaging in this play space.

Programme of Activities

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment. After dinner, some children accessed toys from the shelf while others rested on the soft mats and chose to explore books, supported by an adult.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported between the adults and the children, observed both in play, story time and at snack time.

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 entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children in the indoor and outdoor areas on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication, which is only administered in an emergency, was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate handwashing for staff and children in the sanitary area adjacent of the care rooms.

- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- An adequate administration of medication record was available to document medication given should this be required in an emergency. All staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the services administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs of the children in the age group one to two years of age were child led but there was also a designated time for sleep after dinner. The children slept in one of the two sleep areas, one designated cot room adjacent to the sleep room and the other being a sleep area within the care room in the service. The service had an adequate number of cots to accommodate the age profile of the children who required cots for safe sleep. All children were offered the opportunity to sleep after their dinner. All shoes and heavy clothing were removed before children who required sleep were placed in their cots. Each care room had a cosy area for children to use who did not sleep during their day. Sleeping children's breathing, position and colour was recorded in addition to the temperature of the designated cot room.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures for two adults were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing practices were inadequate on the day of inspection to prevent the spread of infection and cross contamination as evidenced by the following:
 - Children's hands were not consistently washed after their nappy change before being returned to the care room.
 - A staff member was observed during nappy changes to redress the children wearing the same soiled glove from the nappy change.
 - The nappy changing procedure did not clearly outline each step of the nappy changing procedure. This practice was found to be non-compliant on the last inspection on 08 January 2024. The

corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have not prevented reoccurrence of non-compliance here.

- Both adult chairs in the Baby room were observed to be worn and torn and posed as risk of cross infection as they cannot be adequately cleaned.

Safe Sleep:

- While it is acknowledged that sleep time in the Baby room is child-led, and staff are familiar with the procedures for safe sleep, sleep checks were not documented on individual children's sleep charts during nap time. The sleep check records were not documented for two children during the inspection. At 12:20 it was noted by the inspector that for one child, the last documented check was at 12:00 and for another child, at 11:55 despite the fact that the adult in the room was physically carrying them out. This is not in line with the services policy which states that these checks must be carried out and recorded every 10 minutes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Further to the expired Garda Vetting disclosures, an application has been submitted in relation to one staff member. The second staff member is currently on extended leave, and the registered provider is not currently able to undertake re-vetting. To ensure that this doesn't occur again in the future, a staff file cover sheet has been compiled to be placed in the front of each staff members file. There is a section to highlight when re-vetting is required and this will be applied for in advance.

Infection Control:

- Regarding nappy changing procedures, it is acknowledged that steps were missed in the procedure on the day of inspection. The registered provider confirms that generally the service maintains good hygiene practices, but staff were nervous on the day of inspection, which is a basic human response. Regarding the washing of children's hands, it is accepted that this step was missed on occasion. Access has been arranged for the children to use child height sinks within the care room, to ensure this action is corrected and to ensure it doesn't happen again in the future. In addition, during a scheduled staff meeting on the 13 February 2026, the nappy changing policy and procedure was reviewed with all staff and each staff member signed off to this effect.

- Following the inspection, the two adult chairs were removed from the care room. Two new chairs were purchased and replaced. Staff will ensure to carry out checks on furniture in the future, and any damaged items will be removed and replaced.

Safe Sleep:

- A staff meeting was held on 13 February 2026 and the updated policy on safe sleep was reviewed with all staff reminding them of their responsibilities in documenting the safe sleep checks every ten minutes.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Email evidence of Garda Vetting Application

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of staff meeting and review of nappy changing policy signed by all attendees.

Photographic evidence of two new chairs installed in the care room.

Safe Sleep:

Photographic evidence of documented sleep checks in the week following the inspection

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection

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

- A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance which expires on 27 March 2026 for a full day care service which covers a maximum of 58 children.