

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR150
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Links Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Sommerset House, Stradbrook Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A94 V295
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre Kelly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date 1 of Inspection:</b>	08/05/2025
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<b>Date 2 of Inspection:</b>	09/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children: Day 1</b>	AM	189	PM	172
<b>No of pre-school children: Day 2</b>	AM	176	PM	N/A

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Early Years Inspectorate-Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, County Dublin, A96P3Y6.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	O. Quill and R. Duff
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
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### 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>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Links Childcare is a private childcare facility which is one of fourteen services operated by the registered provider in the Dublin region; this service was established in January 2012. The service is registered to provide full day to children aged 0-6 years and a facility for school aged care is also provided within the premises. The service operates Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18:30.

The premises is a purpose-built two-story facility consisting of six care rooms on the ground floor and six care rooms on the first floor. Designated sleep rooms are provided on the ground floor and two outdoor play areas are available to the children, one on the ground floor and a roof top terrace on the upper floor.

### Staffing

In total 52 adults are employed in the service including a cook and domestic staff. The registered provider does not work in the service. The service appointed a manager and deputy manager to support staff on the ground floor and the first floor. In total 42 adults worked directly with the pre-school children on both days of inspection. The area manager arrived after the inspection commenced and was available for both days of inspection. The Director of Support Services attended the feedback meeting.

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

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(1), (2), (3), (4) and (7)(a) Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1), (2) and 8(a) Staffing levels

Regulation 16(1)(h), (i), (j) and (k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service

Regulation 19(1)(b) Health welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16, 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Octopus, Jellyfish, Otter, Shark, Dolphin and Sealion rooms.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the managers, Director of Support Services, staff and children who were present on 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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
- (b) The person in charge and a named deputy were always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a person who could deputise to be present at all times of opening.
- (c) The service had a clearly documented management structure with staff roles outlined. Adults demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the lines of authority within the service.
- (2) The inspection focused on records for 25 adults who had been employed since the previous inspection in relation to regulations (2)(a)(b) and (d), and (4). Records for all adults employed in the service 52 in total were inspected for regulation 9(2)(c).
- (a)(b) Of the 50 written verified references that were required, 29 were available from a past employer and 21 were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults employed in the service. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting had been sourced as required for 24 adults who had lived outside the state as an adult for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) Garda vetting disclosures, international police vetting and reference verifications were available as required for 25 adults prior to them commencing work in the service.
- (4) Records were available evidencing that 24 staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. One of these staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).
- (7)(a) Records were available to demonstrate staff induction was completed this included training on service policies and procedures. Staff were familiar with the relevant policies and procedures when spoken to and care

practices observed were carried out as per policy. The person in charge reported that supervision meetings are carried out with all staff. Supervision records were completed, and evidence of continuous professional development was maintained on each staff file. The manager stated staff meetings are held every 6-8 weeks and a record of these meetings was available.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the first day of inspection there were 189 children attending the service were supervised by 42 adults and on day two of the inspection 176 children attending the service were supervised by 42 adults.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

### 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) Details of the attendance of each child in the Octopus, Jellyfish, Otter, Shark, Dolphin and Sealion rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) The staff roster was available on both days of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service on each day.
- (j) A sample of 15 medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.
- (k) A sample of 26 accident and incident forms were reviewed as part of the inspection. Details of accidents and incidents were recorded as required. The forms were signed by the parent/ guardian, member of staff caring for the child and the manager.

### 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-*

- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place within the service. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children’s cues promptly. Younger children in the Octopus and Jellyfish rooms were comforted when they became upset. Staff spoke kindly to them, listened to them and responded appropriately.

Food was offered to children at regular intervals throughout the day and food choices were appropriate for children’s dietary needs. Additional portions of food was available and provided as requested. Water was offered with meals and was available throughout the day in the care rooms. Bibs were provided to protect the children’s clothes from becoming wet or soiled when eating. The children sat in groups when eating. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff provided additional support to younger children as required. Staff were observed sitting with children at dinnertime and engaging in conversation which promoting a relaxed atmosphere. Care was given to children’s appearance and staff used individual cloths to clean younger children’s hands and faces after eating.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

During the inspection children’s sleep needs were met. Children slept in cots and low-level mats appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing outer clothing and footwear. Soothers were given to those that used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff sitting with the children and soothing them as needed during this time.

All children had an opportunity for outdoor play. Children were dressed appropriately with sun hats and staff were observed to help children apply sun cream before going outdoors and drinking water was available to the children in the outdoor area.

Staff described how they communicate with parents, using an online application which details information about each child’s day including diet, nappy changes, sleep and activities completed. Parents were observed in the

service during drop off and collection times and staff shared information about the children with their parents at these times.

### 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 front door to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. The outdoor areas had high fencing and were secured. Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly. Child proof locks were provided on low level cupboards. Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of reach of children. The kitchen was inaccessible.

##### Infection Control:

The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. Daily cleaning schedules were available and completed. Liquid soap, warm water, paper towels and hand dryers were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff guided children to wash their hands after toileting, after outdoor play and before meals. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures. A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

##### Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Detailed records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine, a witnessing staff member and the child's parent / guardian.

##### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with the safe policy. Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented.

##### Fire Safety:

Fire exits and the fire assembly point were clearly marked.

##### Outing:

The manager reported children are not taken on any outings from the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

## General Safety:

In the outdoor area to the front of the premises the following hazards were observed.

1. Two shores on the rubber tile playground surface to the front of the service had gaps around the edges and part of the rubber tile surface was uneven posing a potential tripping hazard.
2. Part of the wooden fence was damaged and the wood was cracked, sharp pieces of wood was exposed posing a potential injury risk.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The surrounds of the 2 shores have been filled. The uneven surface is being decoratively fenced off. This work will be completed by the end of July or sooner.
2. The fence has been repaired.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted for points numbered 1., and 2.

## Summary Comment

The corrective actions as stated by the registered provider have successfully addressed the safety issue regarding the shores and the fence being repaired. The registered provider has stated safety measures taken in regards the uneven playground to ensure it is not accessible to the children. The registered provider has stated the surface will be repaired in July or sooner. These corrective actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliance once implemented.