

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR180
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Ready Steady Play
-------------------------	-------------------

Address of Service:	The Crèche, 2nd Level Dundrum Town Centre, Dundrum, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	D16 F447
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Carol Coffey
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Drop-In
----------------------	---------

Date 1 of Inspection:	10/12/2025
Date 2 of Inspection:	07/01/2026
Date 3 of Inspection:	19/02/2026

Day 1 -No of pre-school children:	AM	0	PM	Closed
Day 2	AM	0	PM	Closed
Day 3	AM	0	PM	2

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Carysfort House, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	Linda Magee
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

N/A

Description of service

Ready Steady Play is a drop-in service provided for children whose parents are on the premises of Dundrum shopping centre in Dublin 16. This service was established in 2005 by the current registered provider. The children are aged between 1 -6 years and are cared for in a purpose-built unit on the first floor of the centre. The service is provided between 10am – 6pm, Monday to Sunday.

Staffing

Nine adults are employed to work within this service and the Ready Steady Play service in Liffey Valley shopping centre. This does not include the registered provider who does not work in either service.

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

These inspections were unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Immediate Action Notice Issued 10 December 2025

Regulation 23 –Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the person in charge as concerns were identified as an immediate and significant risks or are likely to be a risk to the safety of the children attending the service which is contrary to the requirement of regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

It is acknowledged the service responded to these concerns on 11 December 2025; however, the response found did not address the risk identified. A further opportunity was afforded to the service. The service submitted this response on 15 December 2025 which was found to reduce the risk. Further information regarding the outcome of this non-compliance can be found as detailed under regulation 23.

The service submitted corrective actions and preventative actions on 14 April 2026. These actions did not address the non-compliances identified. A second opportunity was afforded to the service. This was received on 24 April 2026 and the response was found to meet the regulatory requirements.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the persons in charge, staff and children who were present on the days of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—

(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,

(b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

(a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,

(b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,

(c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) On 10 December 2025, 7 January 2026 and 19 February 2026, the designated person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(1)(a) On 19 February 2026, there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) On 10 December 2025, the inspection focused on records for five staff members who had been employed since the previous inspection dated 5 April 2024, in relation to regulations 9(2)(a)(b) & (d) and (4). Regulation 9(2)(c) was inspected for these 5 adults and a further four adults whose Garda vetting disclosure had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(a) Seven validated references were available from past employers.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (b) One validated reference was available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for nine adults. 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 was required and available for two new staff members.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out for four adults prior to commencing employment in the service.
- (4) There was evidence that five adults working directly with the children had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(a) 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026, there was no named person to deputise as required.
- (2)(a) One of the seven validated references which was available, was not from the staff members most recent past employer. Two further references were not accepted as neither reference was from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (3) Documentation was reviewed for one adult, this evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out for this adult prior to commencing employment in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (a) The service has reviewed and implemented their staffing absences policy, to ensure this will not happen again, this will be adhered to strictly going forward. All staff have been issued with the newly revised updated “staff absences policy” reminding them of the importance of this policy in relation to staff absences and emphasised that it must be adhered to going forward, if not, then disciplinary measures may be implemented against them.
- (2) (a) The service obtained a new reference for this person. As per the newly revised recruitment policy no staff member will be employed until all up to date references are received and going forward the references will be from two different companies.
- (3) The service has implemented new stricter staff recruitment and staff absences policies.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The service has revised their recruitment policy to ensure that the obtaining of a reference must be from a past employer, or a source other than a past employer. Staff will not be permitted to work in Ready Steady Play until a garda vetting disclosure and police vetting (if required) is obtained BEFORE that person starts employment with this Company.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the regulatory requirement.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(6) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 3 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were present and available to work directly with the children attending the drop-in service, however no children were present in the service on 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026. Two preschool children and one school aged child were present on 19 February 2026.

(6) The minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 3 of Schedule 6 was unable to be inspected on 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026 as no children were present.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

On 19 February 2026, the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 3 of Schedule 6 was satisfied during the inspection.

(8) (a) On 19 February 2026, two adults were on the premises at all times during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

On 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026

(8)(a) Two adults were not on the premises on either day of inspection. The person in charge advised the inspector on 10 December 2026, that the service will close early as no additional staff were available to work in the service.

On 7 January 2026, the person in charge stated the service was closed as a second person was not available to work in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(8)(a) The service has revised their staff absences policy to ensure two staff are always on.

The service has issued all staff with the newly revised updated “staff absences policy” reminding them of the importance of this policy in relation to staff absences and emphasised that it must be adhered to going forward, if not, then disciplinary measures may be implemented against them. In the revised new policy there are actual times (am/pm) that staff must notify the service of any absence, to enable the service to better respond and get adequate cover in time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met. This regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 13 - Temporary pre-school services and pre-school services in drop-in centres

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(1) A registered provider of a temporary pre-school service or a preschool service in a drop-in centre shall ensure there are no more than 24 children attending the service at any given time.

(3) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that no child attends the service for longer than 2 hours consecutively.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge confirmed that the maximum number of children that are accommodated at any one time is twenty children.

(3) Records reviewed on 10 December 2025, 7 January 2026 and 19 February 2026, confirmed no child attended the service for longer than two hours consecutively in the week prior to this inspection as per the policy of the service.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(i) On 19 February 2026, the staff roster did accurately reflect who was present on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(i) On 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026, the staff roster did not accurately reflect who was present on the day of inspection.

The person in charge was informed at the closing meeting on 10 December 2025 and 7 January 2026 about the importance of the staff roster accurately reflecting the details of the staff on a daily basis.

This was a non-compliance on the last inspection dated 5 April 2024, despite assurances from the registered provider during the corrective action and preventative action process.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The service implemented a review of their staff absences policy. This includes how the roster must be updated in “real time” to reflect who is covering the shifts at any given moment.

The service has implemented a further review of their staff absences policy, whereby the roster which is up on the designated wall area (kitchen area) will reflect at all times who is working on the premises in “real time”.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documents were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met. This regulation will be reviewed on 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

(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)(a)&(b) On 10 December 2025 & 7 January 2026, this regulation not inspected as no children were present.

On 19 February 2026.

No food was provided for the children on the premises. Drinking water was available for the children at all times during the inspection. Staff confirmed if a child requires a nappy change, parents are contacted and asked to come and attend to their child. On the day of inspection one child was supported to use the toilet independently.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The care room was divided into different interest areas which included a home-corner, supermarket, a construction area, transport area and a cosy corner. The cosy corner had areas with matting and cushions which were available for children to rest or take a break from activities as required. A large variety of toys and materials were available to the children. These were stored and displayed at the children's eye level on low shelving that facilitated easy access by the children. This included a selection of dress up clothing, musical instruments, blocks and numerous teddy bears in the pet hotel. The outdoor play area is situated at the side of the service and has an artificial grass surface. Staff stated this area is only used during the summer months.

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 to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The service had strict admission and collection policies. These were observed on the day of inspection. Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children. All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were supervised washing their hands after using the toilet. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

Administration of Medication:

The administration policy states no medication is administered in the service unless it is lifesaving medication. If a child is unwell, parents are contacted to come and attend to their child.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were clearly marked. The fire drill procedure and fire escape plan were displayed in the service. Staff demonstrated through discussion they were familiar with the fire drill procedure.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Immediate Action Notice issued on 10 December 2025.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

1. No adult on the premises had in date first aid training or was trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) see regulation 25 First Aid. The service responded to these concerns on 15 December 2025, this response was found to reduce the risk identified.
2. On 19 February 2026, one of the fire exits was obstructed with several room dividers. The staff member confirmed these dividers are placed here as there is a child who attends on a regular basis who is prone to opening the fire escape. The fire escape leads out onto steps which go down to the main road. The service has no risk assessment in place for when this child attends. As this child was not present on the day of inspection, the staff member removed these dividers to ensure the fire exit was clear.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The staff member has completed her FAR training. As per the revised recruitment policy, staff must have their first aid training certificates done before they start work in the service.
2. The service has revised and updated their Inclusion policy and created new care plans for children with special and/or additional needs. Each child with special and/or additional needs will now have their own individual care plans written up for them with their specific likes/dislikes and any safety issues regarding them written clearly in their care plan. The care plans are put in a main care plan file (filled alphabetically, by each child's surname) so they are easily accessible to staff, so they can be read at a glance, each time the child is in. The care plans alert the service to the specific needs of any child with special and/or additional needs and alerts staff, what to watch out for, especially from a safety point of view certain behaviours like door opening, toys in mouth etc and ensures that the service are better equipped to watch out for such behaviours of that specific child.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been addressed.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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

- (1) On 19 February 2026, a person trained in first aid for children was available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was adequately stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service as required.
- (b) A first aid box was always available to the adults and children in the service.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on 18 February 2026.
- (b) There was an annual record to show that the firefighting equipment and fire alarms had been serviced.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.