

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015DS209

**Name of Service:** Loreto Playgroup Company Limited by Guarantee

**Address of Service:** St. Mark's Junior School, Springfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin

**Eircode:** D24 N924

**Name of Registered Provider:** Sr. Teresa McCullagh

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 03/03/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	34	PM	7
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Early O'Brien
<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>	Click or tap here to enter text.
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### Description of service

Loreto Playgroup Company Limited by Guarantee is a community based early years' service, established in 2004. The service is registered to provide sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate a sessional service from 08:45 to 11:45 and from 12:15 to 15:15, Monday to Friday. The service operates from two classrooms in a prefabricated building on the grounds of St Mark's Junior School in an urban area of Tallaght. An outdoor play area is located adjacent to the building and the children also have use of the school grounds for outdoor play.

### Staffing

There are five staff members employed to work in the service and one adult employed under a community employment programme. There were six staff present on the day of inspection, including the designated person in charge, and all were working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children 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/ records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment
- 11 (1)(3)(8)(a) Staffing Levels
- 15 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) Record of a Pre-School Child
- 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child
- 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- 25 First Aid
- 26 Fire Safety Measures
- 28 Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, 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.

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

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service manager 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 unannounced at 09:20am on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)  
Following a discussion with the person in charge and a review of six staff files it was confirmed that there were no new employees since the last inspection on 07 June 2022.

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

(a)(b) Twelve written and validated references were available as required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff members demonstrating that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting is not required as there was no evidence to suggest that any adult employed in the service had spent time outside of the state of Ireland for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)  
All adults employed in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore 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.

(3)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the inspection.  
There were 14 children attending Room 1 being supervised by 3 adults on the morning of inspection.  
There were 20 children attending Room 2 being supervised by 3 adults on the morning of inspection.

There were 7 children being cared for by 2 adults on the afternoon of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times

### 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) Twelve children’s records were sampled and reviewed. The records contained the required information as set out in Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (i).

### 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

Heathy eating is promoted in the service and children bring their own lunch from home for snack time in the ECCE session. Water was available to the children from their own bottles which they had access to.

On the day of inspection, children were observed to take their lunchbox from the fridge and were encouraged to open and close lunch boxes and bottles and be responsible for their own belongings. Snack time was a social experience during which time the staff members interacted with and engaged in social conversations with the children. Using gentle tones this promoted a relaxed atmosphere.

Children are encouraged to use the toilet and engage in handwashing independently with assistance provided where needed.

Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own belongings and to put on and take off own coats by themselves with support provided when required.

##### Supporting Relationships

The children appeared happy and content and were engaged and relaxed within the care rooms. The staff members ensured that the children were supported in all aspects of their physical, emotional and social wellbeing and demonstrated warmth and respect in all interactions with the children. Staff members were heard using gentle tones with the children and encouraged them to share their stories.

##### Physical and Material Environment

The indoor environment was bright and arranged into defined areas of interest, providing children with freedom to play and explore. Designated interest areas within the room included an arts and crafts and mark making station, a construction area, a dolls house, a dress-up area, a home corner, a play kitchen, and a library area. Photos of each child's family were displayed on a family wall at their level. Birthday charts and children's artwork were also on display, and this demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.

Staff informed the inspector that children enjoy time in the outdoor play area daily, where possible. Children were not observed to play in this space on the day of inspection. Equipment and materials available appear to provide appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. The outdoor area was surfaced with artificial grass and staff informed the inspector that when children play outdoors, resources are brought from indoors such as water tray and sand tray, dolls and buggies. There was a storage unit next to the care rooms which contained equipment for use including balls and ride-on toys. Children also have access to a larger outdoor play space which is a grassed area used by the primary school.

### **Programme of Activities**

During the inspection children's individual choice was respected in the daily routine in which they are encouraged to participate. There are picture cues and visual displays on the wall at their level to support them to make decisions on their play throughout the day. Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment, engaged in movement activities and relaxing activities both individually and as a group with freedom to access resources from low level shelving. Children are familiar with the routine and handle transition between activities very well supported by the educators.

### 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 with a buzzer system to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

Visitors to the premises were required to sign in on arrival to the premises.

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.

Good hand washing practices were observed after toileting and before eating.

Lunch boxes that included perishable food items were stored in the fridges in the playrooms in line with safe food guidance

##### Fire Safety:

On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed

##### Outing:

Following discussion with the person in charge and staff on the day of inspection, they informed the inspector that they do not take the children on outings during the year.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Administration of Medication:

1. While staff were familiar with the medical needs of two children and the procedures to follow in terms of emergency treatment, no care plans were available to support this. This poses a risk to the safety of children in the event of a medical emergency.

##### Fire Safety:

2. A review of documentation evidenced that fire drills are not occurring monthly in the service. The last recorded fire drill was documented to have taken place on 10 December 2024. Not practising regular fire drills can hinder the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### **Administration of Medication:**

A team meeting was held to discuss the importance of having care plans in place for all children with allergies or medical needs. A copy of the care plans not available on the day of inspection are now displayed on the wall in the care room. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

To prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance, the medication policy has now been updated to include health care plans. One staff member will be responsible for assessing new application forms and linking in with parents/guardians should a care plan be required to be in place.

#### **Fire Safety:**

Fire drills have now been completed as required since inspection. A team meeting was held to discuss the importance of completing these monthly.

A fire drill timetable has been displayed as to when the fire drills will take place each month going forward.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### **Administration of Medication:**

Photographic evidence of the care plans now displayed and a copy of the revised medication policy.

#### **Fire Safety:**

Photos of a recent fire drill have been submitted with a copy of the proposed monthly fire drill plan.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately 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.*

*(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) A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. All staff hold current FAR certification.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on the premises.

## 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)

While it is acknowledged that there was a record of fire drills, the last recorded fire drill was documented as having been carried out on 10 December 2024. Please refer to regulation 23 of this report.

(b)

A record was maintained of when the fire detection system and smoke alarms were last serviced on 03 March 2025.

Firefighting equipment records were available demonstrating that these were last serviced in January 2025.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous places throughout the service.

## 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 25 March 2025 for a sessional service which covers 44 children.