

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS241
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Name of Service:	Hi-5 Playschool
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Address of Service:	22 Manor Road, Palmerstown, Dublin 20, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D20 TF65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Andreia Bittencourt
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	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:	R. Duff
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

This private childcare service was established in 2015 and is one of two services operated by the registered provider. Part-time care and education is provided for children aged two and a half years to five years of age between the hours of 9am and 1.15pm; a concurrent sessional service also operates. School-aged childcare is provided in the afternoon.

The service operates from an adapted retail unit in a residential area of Dublin southwest. Two care rooms are available to the children and an outdoor space is provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs six adults including the person in charge. The registered provider does not work in the service. The person in charge does not work directly with the children but is available for support when needed. There were five staff working directly with the children 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 26 Fire safety measures

Regulation 28 Insurance

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

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The inspection included a review of the required documentation for one staff member employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 22 November 2022. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the six staff members employed in the service. The following documentation was available;

(a)(b) Of the two written and validated references that were required, two were available from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for six staff members employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures from all staff members were assessed to

determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Garda vetting which was dated within the last three years was available for five staff members, however, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was not required for one staff member who was employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection on 22 November 2022 as they had not lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)
Records were available evidencing that one staff member who was employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection on 22 November 2022 held the required qualification.

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)
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 sessional and part time services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 30 children attending the service being supervised by 5 staff members on the day of 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-

(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

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place. The children moved freely in both rooms – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. Children brought snack from home. Drinks were readily available within both care rooms. Mealtimes were social occasions with children and adults sitting together, staff provided children with help when needed.

Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. There was evidence that equipment and materials provided were based on the children’s individual needs and emergent interests. Toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving units and accessible to children. Both care rooms also had cushions and floor mats to facilitate rest or provide a place for children to take a break from activities. During the morning session, the children in the Butterfly room made playdough with staff members. Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and were dressed appropriate to the weather.

Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child’s day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. On the day of inspection transitions from preschool to home were observed to be friendly and informative to parents or guardians collecting children.

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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was enclosed, restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a locked press or out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Both the indoor and outdoor environment were maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and pedal operated bins.
- The children and staff members washed their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection. Care plans were available for children who required regular or emergency medication.

Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. 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 for 1 adult working in the service.

2. In the Butterfly room, two electrical cables from a fridge and a fan were observed trailing onto the floor. The cables were in reach of children during the inspection; this poses a potential risk of injury to a child.
3. In the Caterpillar room, anti-febrile medication was stored on a low shelf in an unlocked refrigerator, the refrigerator was accessible to children. This poses a potential risk of harm to children if they accessed it.
4. In both care rooms, children's lunch boxes containing whole grapes were handed out to children at snack time. Children had started to eat the grapes before staff members cut them up. The healthy eating policy shared with parents does not include information about chopping food into bite size pieces for children. Whole grapes pose a potential risk of choking to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated:

1. The outstanding vetting disclosure has been received, regular checks will be undertaken to ensure all documents are in date.
2. The trailing wires in the butterfly room have now been encased, the manager will monitor any cables in the future to ensure they are safe and not trailing.
3. The lock has been replaced on the fridge, the manager will ensure this remains in place at all times.
4. Parents have been reminded of the importance of cutting fruit for children's lunch, staff will also check daily before handing lunch boxes to the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. This regulation will be assessed on the 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill was carried out on 15 August 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced in August 2025.
- (2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed on the wall in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 40 children and an expiry date of 27 March 2026.