

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY008
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Name of Service:	Parkside Early Learning
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Address of Service:	Cabra Sports & Community Club, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D07 Y891
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sara Olawoye
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly
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

Parkside Early Learning is a sessional service which operates a morning session from 9am to 12 midday and the afternoon session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and caters for children aged between 2 years to 6 years. The service operates from a care room on the first floor of Cabra Sports & Community Gym on the north side of Dublin City. The service has a reception area, a large bright care room, sanitary facilities, and a manager's office. The care room leads directly out to a large secure veranda and on the day of inspection children moved between the indoor and outdoor play areas independently.

Staffing

The service employs a total of four staff members including the registered provider. The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis, coordinating the day-to-day operations of the service and working directly with the children when needed. On the day of the inspection three staff were working directly with the children and the registered provider was available to assist if required. One staff member is employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model. There was also a student present on the day of the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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 premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 24. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Pre-school Room morning session.

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 registered provider, deputy 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.

(b) The deputy manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 09:35am and was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived at 10.30am.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities outlined.

(2) The files of the registered provider, three staff and the student were reviewed. The following was recorded:

(a) Six written validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Two written references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults and the student. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that the registered provider and three adults who work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Minister.

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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the correct adult to child ratios were maintained in the service.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

In the preschool room morning session, there were 2 adults including the deputy manager and the room leader caring for 21 children aged 3 years to 5 years and 2 months.

In the preschool room afternoon session, there were 2 adults caring for 14 children aged 2 years and 7 months to 5 years and 8 months.

In addition, there was a student present on the day. The registered provider was available to provide support when needed from 10.30am.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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) Each child's learning and development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

Basic needs:

- Children's snack and water bottles were brought from home. Snack consisted of brown bread, crackers, cheese, yoghurts, and fruit including apples, mandarins and strawberries. There was a rolling snack available to the children so children can choose when they would like to eat. Children were observed eating together in groups at different times during the session. Children's snack times were observed to be calm and relaxed. Children and staff were observed to sit together and chatted socially during this time. Staff offered help to children when needed. There was a final call for snack at 10.30am to ensure that all the children have eaten.
- Children's water bottles were accessible to the children during the session.
- There was a cosy corner observed in the preschool room for the children to relax in as required. The cosy corner was in an enclosed area and equipped with cushions and blankets and soft toys. There was also a separate 'Library/Sensory room' equipped with a sofa, 2 small rocking chairs, cushions, blankets, and a bookshelf with a selection of books for reading and relaxation.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children; and children were given praise and encouragement. Children were offered given comfort and support when needed. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service.

- Staff were observed interacting with children at their level and engaging in children’s play at tabletop time in small groups, during music and movement activities and outdoor play.
- Children’s identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a ‘Family Wall’ display with photographs of children’s families displayed at the children’s level. In addition, a birthday chart, children’s artwork, and ‘Our Community’ photographs were displayed which included photographs of the local area. In addition, there were cubbies for the children to store their bags during the session.
- Staff discussed that the service communicates and shares information with the parents through a monthly newsletter, on the noticeboard in the service and using an online messaging application.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given verbal cues to support them with the transitions. Children were involved in transitions such as the ‘rolling snack’ time. The staff sang a goodbye song with the children at circle time to prepare the children for home time. There was a daily routine displayed in the room which was followed on the day. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

Programme of Activities:

- Children were observed to be given choice in their play experiences. There was a ‘free flow’ system in place during free play time and children could choose to play indoors or outdoors as they preferred.
- Adults facilitated group activity times involving tabletop activities at tables in small groups. A large circle time with the whole group was facilitated before home time where adults discussed days of the week, the weather and sang songs with the children.
- The staff facilitated a music and movement group session with the children which included dancing, singing and movement to music. This promoted gross motor development and fundamental movement skills.
- Group documentation of children’s learning and development is documented in a ‘floor book’ which includes photographs of children engaged in learning experiences and children’s drawings. The registered provider discussed that each child also has their own learning journal.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was age-appropriate furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit whilst they played or for mealtimes.
- There was a variety of play based materials available that were suitable to the age and stage of children’s development divided into labelled interest areas which were accessible to children to include the following: There was a home corner area with kitchen and shop with supporting materials to support dramatic and pretend play for children. There was a creative area with art materials such as chalk, chalk boards, paint easels and paint brushes, paper, pencils and crayons to support creative art and mark making for children and sensory play materials to include playdough, rolling pins and playdough shapes. There was a cosy area in the care room and a library/sensory room for children to relax, each with a variety of books to provide opportunities for storytelling. There was a construction corner with supporting materials on shelves to include plastic building bricks and transportation toys such as wooden train tracks and fire engine. Small world toys included a large dolls house and animals and there were table top materials such as jigsaws and threading.
- An outdoor veranda play area was available for children. The equipment and materials included a playhouse, a wooden kitchen, a large tuft tray with sand and supporting materials, climbing wall, hollow wooden blocks, hula hoops, chalk and a speaker playing music. There was a covered area for children to play in adverse weather.

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:

- Entry to the service was managed by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The inspector was asked to sign in on arrival.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor veranda area was secured and was mainly surfaced with artificial grass.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly labelled and unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the wall in the reception area of the service.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after art activities and sand play.
- Children's snacks which were brought from home, were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Lidded bins were available for disposal of waste and contaminated items.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The details of the attendance of one child had not been accurately recorded in the attendance book. A child who was present on the day was not recorded as present from 9.00am until 10:18am. It is acknowledged that this was rectified when the inspector brought this to the attention of staff. Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) The registered provider reported that there was a staff meeting to discuss the importance of the children's attendance book and children being signed in as soon as possible and it was realised that the person on the door has too much responsibility answering the door and completing the role book.

Preventive Action

(1) The registered provider reported that the floater (is the person in the middle door that welcome the children) will now mark the role book as the children enter the preschool and the person on the door will not have that responsibility. Children will be marked on the attendance board (white board) for double safety. The staff will make sure that the number of children on the attendance board matches the children's attendance book, with a regular head count carried out.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 24 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.

(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

(2) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the care room of the service. This was stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. There was no staff member available with FAR training from 9.00 until 10.30am when the registered

provider arrived on the premises. It is acknowledged that there was a staff member trained in paediatric first aid who was available on the premises at this time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) The staff member with First Aid Response (FAR) training will be on premises at all times and anything needed outside the premises will be delegated to another member of staff.

Preventive Action

(1) The registered provider has signed up another member of staff to attend a 3-day First Aid Response (FAR) training course before the end of the term.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Evidence of booking confirmation for staff member to attend First Aid Response (FAR) training was submitted and is to be carried out over 3 days on the 17 June 2025, 19 June 2025 and the 20 June 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 25 has been addressed.

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 firefighting 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 record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 31 March 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment was available. Firefighting equipment was certified as having been last serviced on 5 September 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) An up-to-date record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(b) The registered provider contacted the building management in relation to the smoke alarm certificate. The fire maintenance company was closed and unable to provide smoke alarm certificate. The registered provider reported that the service deems fire safety extremely important. The service received a quotation from a new fire safety company. Fire alarm testing was carried out on the 11th of June with a smoke alarm certificate issued on the 11th of June 2025.

Preventive Action

(b) The registered provider has requested a direct copy of fire maintenance be sent to them, so they know when maintenance is due.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Evidence of purchase order request form for service of Smoke/Alarm System with fire maintenance company was submitted.
- Evidence of quote from fire maintenance company was submitted.
- Evidence of Fire Alarm Testing certificate to include smoke alarms was received on the 11th of June 2025 with service carried out on the 11th of June 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 26 has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 22 children for the session with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.