

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY218
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Name of Service:	The Playroom
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Address of Service:	87 Rosemount Avenue, Artane, Dublin 5, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D05 F757
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine McCullagh
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
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

The Playroom is a privately owned service based in a residential area of Co. Dublin. The service is registered to provide sessional, full-day care to children aged 1-6 years old. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The Playroom is in a two-storey building and the Wobbler, Tweenie room and cot room are on the ground floor. On the first floor the large open room has been partitioned to provide ECCE 1 and ECCE 2. There are also a kitchen and sanitary facilities available. There is an outdoor area directly accessible from the Tweenie room. The registered school age service is not currently in operation.

Staffing

The registered provider works in a supernumerary capacity in the service on a daily basis. The registered provider currently employs seven staff members all of whom work directly with the children.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First aid and Regulation 28 Insurance. However, on inspection

additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service and Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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, 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)(b) The service had a person in charge and a named deputy. A review of the set roster demonstrated that designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge was in the service at all times during operational hours.

(c) On discussion with staff members and the registered provider, there was a clear management structure in place and staff were familiar with it.

(2) On the day of inspection, the recruitment files of five new staff members were reviewed. The files of the remaining staff were reviewed at the last inspection. In addition, the Garda vetting disclosures for three staff were also reviewed.

(a) (b) Ten written and validated references were available for the five new staff members

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the five new staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the staff members and registered provider who were working at the previous inspection.

(d) A review of the documentation concerning the staff members' employment history demonstrated that police vetting was not required for three staff members. The police vetting required for two staff members was available for review.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the five new staff members employed to work directly with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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

(2) On the inspector's arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection for the Tweenie Room and ECCE 1. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- There were two adults available for six children 2 years 3 months to 3 years and 1 month old in the Tweenie Room.
- There was one adult and 6 children aged 2 years and 2 months to 3 years old in ECCE 1.

During the inspection, a staff member, arrived to provide relief cover and support.

(8) Following discussions with the registered provider and a review of the staff rosters, there were two adults available on the premises at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection an adequate number of adults was not working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult child ratio was observed to be incorrect in the Wobbler Room and ECCE 2 Room as shown in the table below;

Room	Number and age range of children	Time	Number of adults available	Number of adults required
Wobbler room	5 children aged 1-2 years old	10.00 – 10.25	1	2
	1 child aged 2-3 years old	11.08 – 12.00		
ECCE 2 Room	10 children aged 3-6 years old	12.15 – 13.43	1	2

During the inspection, a staff member scheduled to work, arrived to provide relief cover and support.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(2) The registered provider stated that a staff member who was scheduled to work arrived later than planned. Two other staff members due to start could not as their Garda Vetting had not been received and another staff member had finished following the end of term.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(2) The registered provider stated that there are now two staff members in the Wobbler Room, two staff members in the Tweenie Room and three staff members in the pre-school float. There is also a staff member and the registered provider available as a float. The registered provider submitted a roster.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance. This will be examined on any future inspection to ensure adherence to child: staff ratios.

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;

Non-Compliance Information

(16)(1)(h) The attendance records were not accurately maintained. The inspector observed that at 12.57 the attendance record for the Tweenie room had not been completed, as children were not signed in for the day. On the inspector's initial walkaround at 10.16am there were 6 children in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(16)(1)(h) The registered provider stated that attendance records are normally completed / marked in as soon as a child enters and leaves the creche. This was an oversight on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider will ensure that the roll books are completed.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance and 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

Basic Needs

During dinner time children in the Wobbler room were provided with bibs and encouraged to eat independently with support where required. Children in the older rooms were provided with appropriate cutlery for their dinner. The inspector observed that children who asked for more were given further portions. The children's water was accessible to the children within their rooms. A staff member was observed changing nappies as required and at these times the staff member engaged with the children and chatted with them throughout the process. The older children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required.

Supporting relationships around children

The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care. Staff in all rooms were observed engaging in a kind and developmental way with children's play. For example, in the Tweenie room the children were playing balancing games with the staff member, in the Wobbler room the staff member and children were reading and picking books together. A key worker system was in place throughout the service, and this was supported by various long and short-term planning which were available for review. Children in the older rooms were observed picking activities they took part in, and this included sensory activities including sensory play and painting.

Physical and material environment

Appropriate relaxation areas were available in the rooms, with cosy areas available in all rooms. Following the previous inspection the Wobbler room contained a range of toys and equipment that were appropriate for the developmental age of the children. This included activity centres, push along toys, soft climbing blocks and a soft play area. The home corners in each of the care rooms were equipped with a range of materials which included food, cutlery and dining items. There were also babies, buggies and clothes available. The sample of battery-operated toys checked by the inspector in each of the rooms were working. The inspector observed the children enjoying the outdoor play areas to the rear of the service accessed through the Tweenie room. The outdoor area had a decking surface. Children and staff were observed playing with a large parachute from the ECCE 1 room. The children also had access to a slide, activity wall outdoor kitchen and water tray alongside some ride on and push toys were available.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The storage of equipment did not support independent play in the Tweenie Room. The storage boxes were not labelled and were opaque, therefore children could not easily observe what is in each box to promote independent play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has stated they replaced the storage boxes with see through plastic boxes with new labels to show the children what is in each box.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the boxes in place.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The preventive actions following the last inspection were in place in relation to maintenance issues as the sanitary accommodation shelves were secure and there were no visible overhanging cables.
- Blind cords were secured and were not accessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed appropriate handwashing to support good infection control practices. Children were observed washing their hands after outdoor play and before they ate. Children and staff were observed to wash their hands after nappy changing.

- The sanitary accommodation in the ECCE rooms and on the ground floor was sufficiently maintained to ensure the area could be effectively cleaned.
- Soothers for children were observed to be stored in individual containers.

Safe Sleep:

- The registered provider had ensured that there were documented checks of the sleep room temperatures following the last inspection. The temperature of the cot room whilst children slept was maintained at or below 20°C and the temperature was maintained at or below 22°C.
- Children over 24 months were provided a floor mat for sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The registered provider had not ensured all risks were identified and managed in relation to possible injury. A large dolls house available in the Tweenie room was not anchored and posed a risk of the house being pulled over and causing a possible injury to a child.

Infection Control:

2. Inappropriate nappy changing procedures were observed and were a possible source of cross-contamination. The following was observed.
 - Staff members did not remove their gloves before redressing children after they had a soiled nappy.
 - A staff member was observed returning to the care room, from the nappy changing area and down a short corridor, with the apron on following nappy changing.
3. Bed linen was being stored inappropriately and were being stored in a manner which posed a risk of cross contamination. They were stored in the cubbies off the Tweenie Room and sheets had not been removed from the mattresses. Individual bed linen should be store separately.

Administration of Medication:

4. A procedure was not available for the administration of emergency medication for a child attending the service on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

5. Safe sleep practices were not always implemented in the Tweenie room in-line with Tusla's safe sleep guidelines for children under 24 months as evidenced by the following.

- A child under 24 months was placed to sleep on a floor mat. This is at variance to the guidelines which outline the required sleep equipment for children under 24 months.
- A sleep plan was not in place for this child. This is at variance to the guidelines that state a child can sleep in an approved alternative to a cot provided it is agreed with parents, and a sleep plan is established and signed.

Fire Safety:

6. The registered provider had not ensured that the fire exit route was clear. The fire escape route was partially blocked as there was a mat draped over the handrail and an exercise bike stored on the first-floor exit had the potential to impede safe evacuation from the first floor.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The large dolls house was removed and the registered provider stated they will invest in more appropriate equipment for the age group.

Infection Control:

2. The registered provider stated they had revisited the nappy changing policy and trained each new staff member on how to change a nappy and stick to the proper procedures. As a preventive action the registered provider stated all staff to be trained in nappy training on induction and a follow up training be completed every month.
3. The registered provider stated that bed linen will be removed from each mattress after the child has slept and placed in a separate plastic bag for each child, clearly marked with the child's name.

Administration of Medication:

4. The registered provider stated that care plans and administration records are available with medication records now on an electronic application.

Safe Sleep:

5. The registered provider stated that since the inspection they have invested in contour cocoon mattress for under 2-year-olds and all children under 2 years of age in the Tweenie room will be put to sleep on a cocoon mattress or put into a cot. The registered provider submitted a sample risk assessment for children under two who were not sleeping in a cot.

Fire Safety:

6. The registered provider has stated that both items have been removed and were left in place by a contractor. The fire exit will be kept clear at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the new toy storage, bedding in individual bags, cleared fire escape.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliances identified and will be examined on the next inspection.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in a First Aid Responder (FAR) course was available. On review of the documentation there were two staff members available with in-date FAR certification.
- (2) The first aid equipment available in the service provided adequate resources in the event of a first aid emergency. First Aid boxes were available in the main kitchen in the service and the Tweenie room, which was conspicuous and easily accessible to staff members.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure appropriate supervision during sleep for children in the Tweenie room. The children who were sleeping on day beds were observed to be unattended from 12.54 to 13.01 as the staff member was called to assist in the Wobbler cot room. At 12.54 there were five children sleep, one of whom was under 2 years old. The inspector noted that a child had woken up and informed two staff members. Children who are asleep on daybeds should be actively supervised whilst sleeping to ensure their safety should they wake.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that they were short staffed on the day and was called to support in the wobbler room. The registered provider will ensure there is always a member of staff with the children sleeping on mats and another staff member to cover during sleep time and lunches.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance identified and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was appropriately insured for 60 children from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.