

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL059
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Name of Service:	Charlies Childcare
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Address of Service:	Malahide United FC, Coast Road, Malahide, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K36 YA97
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ronnie Carroll
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	68
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle & S Taaffe
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Charlie's Childcare is one of 10 Early years services owned by the registered provider in the North Co. Dublin area. This service is located in the clubhouse of Malahide United Football Club with 6 care rooms in operation. The Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2 rooms are located in one section of the building and the Toddler room and Wobbler room are accessed through a separate entrance to the rear of the service. The Senior Toddler room and Preschool room 3 are located in a separate modular building to the rear of the main building and have a separate entrance. A sleep room is located adjacent to the Wobbler room. A separate modular building is used as a staff room. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises with a separate outdoor area provided for the children in the Baby room and Toddler room to use.

Staffing

The service employs 21 staff members including the service manager who coordinates the day-to-day operational management of the service and a part-time chef. Nineteen staff members worked directly with the children on the day of inspection including a staff member from one of the company's other services was present in the service providing support in the care rooms. The chief operating officer and area manager were present in the service on the day of inspection and for the closing meeting at the conclusion of the 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19,23,25 and 26; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, chief operating officer and area manager, 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) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

Following a review of the records compiled by the inspectors on the last inspection on 25/09/2024, it was confirmed that there were 4 new members of staff employed in this service since then. These files along with the file for the staff member from the company's other service were reviewed on the day of this inspection, Outstanding childcare qualifications in relation to 1 staff member employed at the previous inspection were also reviewed.

A total of 5 staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) Eight validated written references were available from a previous employer.

(b) Two validated written references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 24 staff members including the Garda vetting for the chief operating officer and area manager. All the Garda vetting records reviewed demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 5 staff members whose files were reviewed and who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 3 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to confirm that the 1 staff member whose files was reviewed and who works directly with the children in the service did not hold an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The staff member has been moved into an ancillary role for the Summer, covering the kitchen staff. They will not be working directly with the children and will move to the school aged service in September until qualification/cert is issued in October. The staff member was an additional third person in the room and a floating staff member has been hired to replace them.

Preventive Action

(4) Ensure all staff members working directly with children will hold a minimum level 5 qualification.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted.

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 inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 9am and remained so throughout the inspection.

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

- In the Wobbler room, there were 7 children aged 1 year 1 month to 1 year 6 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room there were 13 children (of whom 1 child was aged 1 year 11 months) and 12 children were aged 2 years to 2 years 7 months being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the Senior Toddler room there were 9 children aged 2 years 9 months to 3 years 3 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Pre-school room 1 there were 15 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 9 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Pre-school room 2 there were 17 children aged 4 years 4 months to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Pre-school room 3 there were 15 children aged 3 years 3 months and 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.

The service manager and relief staff member were available to cover staff breaks and support with the care of the children in the six care rooms when required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in the service.

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) (a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Basic needs:

- The service provides all meals and snacks to children attending the service on a full day care basis, the hot meal is provided from an outside catering company with the remaining snacks and afternoon tea prepared on site. Mealtimes observed on the day of inspection were social and relaxed experiences, the staff members sat with the children engaging them in conversation whilst encouraging the children's independence with eating and provided support as required. The staff members in the Wobbler room positioned themselves at the children's level while assisting the children to eat and encouraged the children's independence. In all the care rooms the children's water bottles were freely available for the children to take as desired throughout the day.
- The children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required. The staff members used the opportunity to engage warmly with the children chatting to them and singing songs. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently and gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards.

- The children attending the Wobbler room were placed to sleep in the adjoining sleep room for a period of scheduled rest after their dinner, staff members reported that this routine was flexible and if children were tired at other times they were offered the opportunity to sleep.
- Throughout the care rooms the children were observed engaging with the play opportunities available. All the children present in the service had the opportunity to enjoy time in the outdoor play area and the staff members informed the inspectors that outdoor play forms an important part of the daily routine in the service.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Communication with parents was enhanced through the use of an application in real time. Staff members recorded children's food intake, activities, sleep, nappy changing and observations. Additionally, staff members took the opportunity to communicate with parents at drop off and collection.
- Throughout the service staff members were observed to speak to the children in a kind and respectful manner, children's first names were used with gentle voice tones used in all interactions. The children were supported by being kind to each other and were listened to in addition to being praised and encouraged throughout their play. The staff members spoke positively and warmly to and about the children during the inspection.
- Family photographs were on display in the care rooms which supported the children to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in the service and bridge the gap with home.

Physical and material environment:

- Throughout the care rooms the play materials and equipment were positioned at a reachable level for the children on open shelving which supported the children's independence and facilitated choice.
- A suitable variety of play materials and resources were available in all care rooms. Interest areas were well developed including home areas with kitchens and additional accessories such as pots, pans and crockery for the children to extend their play along with dolls with doll care resources and dress up materials all of which supported the children's imaginary play experiences and open-ended play. Construction materials, transport toys, art and crafts materials and a wide range of tabletop materials including a variety of jigsaws were available to the children.
- The Toddler room in the service has recently been reconfigured with a dividing partition that had been in place now removed. The play materials and resources were stored in boxes and containers that were

easily retrievable by the children. The newly configured space allowed the children to move freely within the room choosing the play materials and resources they wanted to play with.

- Sensory materials were available throughout the care rooms with trays of materials including sand and food materials available for the children to use.
- A plentiful supply of books was provided in the care rooms and the children’s language development was facilitated in each room through conversation, storytelling and singing.
- An outdoor play area was provided to the rear of the modular buildings which all the children in attendance in the service had access to on a daily basis. The area was surfaced with artificial grass and provided space for movement and gross motor development with the staff members bringing additional materials to the area for the children to use. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to enjoy playing with large construction blocks as well as engaging in running and free movement. Since the last inspection of the service an additional outdoor area has been provided for the children attending the Wobbler room and the Toddler room to use. The area is located immediately outside the care rooms which enhances the ease with which the children can access the outdoor area. The area is surfaced with artificial grass; a suitably sized slide is provided along with ride on toys and a crawl through tunnel. The children attending the Wobbler room enjoyed time in the water pool on the day of inspection.

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 doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. Three entry doors to the service were accessed using a keypad with both staff and parents of children attending the service having access to the code and access to the Montessori room 1 was facilitated by a staff member who, having sight of callers through the glass panels on the exterior door of the room, opened the secured door to facilitate entry.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The service’s designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

- Play materials and equipment provided in each care room were observed to be safe and suitable for the children present.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins in the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play and outdoor play.
- Soothers were labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use. Staff members clearly described appropriate procedures for the management of mouthed toys and soothers, including washing the items in advance of sterilisation.
- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being worn for each individual nappy change.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- All children aged less than 2 years had access to and were observed sleeping in one of the cots provided in the sleep room.
- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were being performed and documented on all sleeping children, noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern at the time of each check.
- The temperature in the sleep room was monitored and maintained within the safe sleep temperature range of 16 - 20°C.
- Adequate space of at least 50cm was left between the cots and the stackable beds in the sleep room during the inspection and between the stackable beds set up in the Toddler room after lunch.

Fire Safety:

- In discussion with the inspectors, staff members were familiar with appropriate procedures to be undertaken in the event of a fire or any other emergency which would require evacuation and confirmed that fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis. The fire assembly points were identified verbally by staff members and through signage in place outside the premises.

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 who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations in the service.

(b) The first aid supplies were available to the staff members at all times for the children attending 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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 22/05/2025.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in June 2024 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 27/03/2024.

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(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.