

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL318			
Name of Service:	Tigers Childcare			
Address of Service:	Neighbourhood Centre, Ridgewood, Swords, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	K67 D890			
Name of Registered Provider:	Therese Noonan			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	29/10/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	47
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15.			
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly & AM Coyle			
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.

Description of service

Tigers Childcare has 31 early years services operated by the registered provider nationwide. This service provides full day care, part time and sessional care from 7.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. The service currently caters for pre-school children from 9 months to 6 years of age. School aged children are not accommodated in this service. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00midday for 38 weeks each year. The service is conducted from a purpose-built 2-storey premises located beside a number of commercial units within a residential setting in Swords in North Co. Dublin. There were 4 care rooms in operation, with the Discoverers room and the Explorers room both located on the ground floor, and the Active Cubs room and the ECCE room both located on the first floor. A sleep room is accessed directly from the Discoverers room, and a fully enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises.

Staffing

A service manager is employed who oversees the operational management of this service, working with a team of 10 staff, 9 present on the day, who work directly with the children including the deputy manager. There are 2 regional quality support managers, one of whom was present on the day. One staff member was employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, in a post which is funded by the minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. A chef carries out cooking and catering duties. In addition, there were 3 agency staff members working directly with the children on the day of the inspection. There are 2 students on work experience placement, 1 of whom was present on the day. The registered provider was not present in the service during the inspection, however joined the closing meeting in an online capacity. In total, there were 16 adults present in the service on the day of 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, 10, 11, 16, 19, 23, 27, 29 and 31. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Explorers Room, Discoverers Room, Junior Active Cubs Room and Active Cubs Room.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of information to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy manager, management team, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There is a designated person in charge for the service and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09:05am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files for 20 adults were reviewed including the person in charge and 11 staff members who work directly with the children. In addition, the following files were reviewed; 2 regional quality support managers, 1 chef, 3 agency staff and 2 students. The following was recorded:

(a) Thirty-nine written references, thirty-eight of which were validated were available from past employers.

(b) One validated and written reference was available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 20 adults whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 10 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 17 adults whose files were reviewed and who may 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 Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

(7)(a) The registered provider ensured that employees were supervised and provided with appropriate induction. In discussion with a recently commenced student, they were able to describe the induction process and the systems in place regarding the review of the service's policies and procedures. The services' Colleague Training Policy states that training is provided to colleagues in line with current regulations and the service ensures that colleagues are provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training in the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies relevant to this inspection were requested and reviewed.

- Accidents and Incidents policy
- Risk Management policy
- Staff Training policy
- Supervision of Staff policy

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 at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

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

- In the Discoverers Room there were 7 children aged 10 months to 1 year 10 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Explorers Room there were 10 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years 10 months being cared for by 3 staff members. A student on work experience placement was present in the care room in a supernumerary capacity.
- In the Junior Active Cubs Room there were 17 children aged 2 years and 5 months to 3 years and 5 months being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the Active Cubs Room there were 15 children aged 3 years and 7 months to 4 years and 7 months being cared for by 3 staff members including 1 staff member employed as part of the Access and Inclusion Model.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster.

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:

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with regulation 10, these were provided in digital format in the service.
- (i) Details of staff rosters were kept on a daily basis and available for inspection.
- (k) Documentary evidence was available in the service to confirm that an incident report had been completed and shared with parents following a recent incident that occurred in the service. This incident report had been shared

through an online digital application and had been signed by the parents and the management team as a means of ensuring that parents had been informed that their child had an accident/incident whilst attending 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

(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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The following demonstrated how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Basic needs:

- Children's meals were provided by an external catering company following a four-week menu plan and reheated by the chef. There was a choice of two hot meals at dinner time, chicken korma with rice and a vegetarian pasta and vegetable dish of macaroni and peas. Children bring a morning snack which consisted of ham sandwiches, crackers and cheese, fruit and yoghurts.
- Children's water bottles were accessible in the care rooms throughout the day.
- Nappy changing occurred at scheduled times and more frequently as required throughout the day. Staff members engaged positively with the children during this time using it as an opportunity for one-to-one interactions with the children.
- The children from the Junior Active Cubs and Active Cubs slept in stackable beds on the floor in the Junior Active Cubs room.
- There were cosy areas in the care rooms where children could select a book for reading and relaxation.

- All children used the outdoor play area on the day of the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate communication using soft tones was observed and children were provided with comfort when needed. This supported the development of relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Staff communicate with parents through use of a digital software application to share information about children's care needs.
- Family albums containing photographs of the children and their families had recently been introduced in the Explorers room. The children were observed to enjoy looking at the family photographs and showing the photographs to their friends. This practice supports the children's sense of belonging in the service.

Physical and material environment:

- There was age-appropriate furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit whilst they played or for mealtimes.
- With the exception of the non-compliances listed below the care rooms were resourced with the following interest areas: home corner and kitchen areas including cooking utensils, crockery, doll house and small world items which supported the children's imaginary play experiences. There were transportation materials including trains and train tracks and construction resource including plastic building bricks. There were tabletop materials such as jigsaws and threading to support early learning numeracy learning and small world materials animals to support children's imaginative and dramatic play. There was a selection of books provided in the book areas which supported children's language development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area surfaced with an impact absorbing surface was located to the side of the premises. There was a large wooden play bus, wooden shop with supporting play materials for dramatic and pretend play, large wooden structure with slide and ride on bikes which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills and building blocks for construction play.

Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- The facilitation of smaller groups of children was observed during the inspection with staff dividing groups between indoor and outdoor play.

(3) No practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally, physically harmful or neglectful were observed during the inspection. Staff members were observed engaging with the children using a partnership approach and showed positive regard for the children at all times throughout the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- The current routines and transition practices from dinner to sleep time in the Explorers room and Junior Active Cubs room were ineffective in creating smooth transitions and meeting children's individual needs. The following was observed:
 - In the Explorer's room as staff were placing the sleep mats and beds in position in the room children were offered the opportunity to settle in their beds to have a nap, one child was settling to sleep in a cocoon bed when 2 other children jumped on top of the bed on 2 occasions causing the child to be distressed and have difficulty in falling asleep. Whilst some children were trying to settle to sleep up to 3 children continued to run around the care room preventing most of the remaining children to settle to sleep. Six of the eight children that were being settled to sleep were eventually settled to sleep at 1:05pm. This delay in placing the children to sleep resulted in the children being overtired and experiencing difficulty in settling.
 - In the Junior Active Cubs room between 12.20pm and 12.55pm, there were 12 children in the Junior Active Cubs room for sleep time. This included 2 children from the Active Cubs room. Three children were playing next to the beds which distracted the children who were due to sleep. Two children in beds were observed playing with toys. Although 1 adult was present in a separate area supporting a child who was awake, the children who showed signs of not needing to sleep were not brought to this area in a timely manner therefore delaying children settling to sleep.

Physical and material environment:

- The home area in the Explorers room was poorly resourced and did not support the children in extending their play experiences. A wooden kitchen unit and wooden cooker were provided however the kitchen did not have a sink and the surface of the cooker was missing. There were no associative play materials available for the children to enhance their play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

1. Daily routines have been introduced alongside educator guides that outline the specific tasks to be completed during transitions. These guides support educators by helping to slow down transitions and ensure children are aware of what will happen next. During sleep time, educators will set up a play invitation after a maximum of 20 minutes for children who do not wish to sleep. Junior Active Cubs also have a designated area for sleep mats.

Physical and material environment:

2. A new home-area kitchen was built and added to the Explorers room to help better define the space. A role-play market was also placed in the area to enhance children's engagement. Additionally, new resources were introduced to the construction area within the Explorers room.

Preventive Action

1. Colleagues have reviewed the transitions policy to strengthen their understanding of transition procedures and ensure the policy is being followed. The educator guides offer additional support by outlining what each transition involves. This information was discussed in a team meeting, during which the Centre Manager clarified expectations for transitions. It was also communicated in our colleague memo. The centre manager attended transition training on 03 December 2025 held by the quality support team to support educators in transitions.

Physical and material environment:

2. Colleagues have reviewed the Interactions and Pedagogy Policy to strengthen their understanding of defined areas and to ensure a safe, hazard-free environment. This was reinforced during the team meeting, where the manager outlined expectations for maintaining a fully resourced and safe learning space.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Daily Routines and Educator Guides.
- Team meeting minutes.
- Policy sheets signed.
- Training sheets signed.
- Colleague memo.

- Photographic evidence of sleep area and new kitchen area and resources.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspectors observed that the entrance doors leading into the premises was secure and monitored by staff to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with an impact absorbing surface.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Staff members from the Junior Active Cubs Room were observed counting children during transitions times and sharing this information with staff members who remained in the care room for example as staff members and children moved from indoor to outdoor play. This was in line with the services 'Headcount and Documentation Policy'.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Pedal operated bins were available for waste and disposal of contaminated items.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- Children's health care plans were kept in the care rooms.

Safe Sleep:

- The ambient temperature in the Junior Active Cubs room where children were sleeping was recorded as 21.6°C.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- In the Explorers room a shelf that was located beside the door leading into the garden was not secure and posed a risk of toppling over and injuring a child.

Infection Control:

- Infection control measures were not always followed. The possible risk of the spread of infection was increased due to the following:
 - The children attending the Junior Active Cubs room did not have their hands washed before snack time.
 - The nappy changing mat was torn with foam exposed in the sanitary accommodation in the Junior Active Cubs Room.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

- The unstable shelf has been removed from the room. A new kitchen was added to the room, removing the broken one.

Infection Control:

- The educator guides provided clearly outline the designated times of day when handwashing must occur, ensuring consistent hygiene practices across the team. In addition, the nappy-changing mat has been replaced with a new one to maintain high standards of cleanliness and safety.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

- During the team meeting, the Centre Manager highlighted the importance of completing the safety checklist for child paths and identifying any potential hazards that must be prevented. This message was further reinforced in the colleague memo, to ensure full understanding from colleagues.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing posters have been displayed near all sinks to support both educators and children in practicing effective infection control. Colleagues have reviewed the Infection Control Policy to enhance their understanding of its importance and to ensure consistent implementation. This was further reinforced by the Centre Manager during the team meeting to ensure clarity and alignment with policy expectations.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Routines and Educator Guides.
- Team meeting minutes.
- Handwashing posters.
- Colleague memo.
- Policy sheets signed.
- Photographic evidence of nappy changing mat.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that all children attending the service were supervised at all times. Children were observed being appropriately supervised whilst in the care rooms and in the outdoor area of the service and when accessing the sanitary facilities. This was in line with the services' 'Safety, Supervision of Children and Transitions' Policy.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(d) The premises of the service was observed to be in a good state of repair and suitable for use by the children.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

(c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

(d) There was evidence that the service manager completed a notification of incident form within 3 days informing the Early Years Inspectorate of an incident that occurred in the service on 17 October 2025.