

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD002
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Name of Service:	Springlawn Childcare Community Group Ltd
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Address of Service:	59 and 60 Springlawn Estate, Springlawn, Longford, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 AY98
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frank Horne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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

Springlawn Childcare Community Group Ltd is located within close proximity of Longford town and is registered as a sessional service operating from 09:30 to 12:30 hrs Monday to Friday. Children attending are aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered for a maximum number of 42 pre-school children, at any one time. There are two care rooms operating from two separate buildings namely no 59 and no 60 Springlawn. An office space is provided on the first floor in no 60. There are outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

Springlawn Childcare Community Group Ltd employs four childcare staff. The registered provider is supernumerary and does not work in the service. One adult is employed as a cleaner.

On the day of inspection, there were five staff members present.

The adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

- Regulation 9(2), (4) - Management and Recruitment.

- Regulation 11 (1), (3) - Staffing levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.
- Regulation 24 – Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 – First Aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 16(1)(a) – Records in relation to a pre-school child.

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

1. A written immediate action notice under Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child was issued to the registered provider on 3 June 2025.
2. A written response was submitted by the designated person in charge on 4 June 2025 outlining the measures taken to address and mitigate the identified risk. The written response was assessed and accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate. See body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

Seven staff files including one student file were reviewed.

(2)
(a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of six adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4) Six adults working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, was not available in respect of one adult whose records was reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Two written references from a past employer and reputable source have been obtained for this staff member. These references are now on file with the rest of the staff members documents. A checklist for each staff member has been created for this purpose.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two references; checklist document.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 9(2)(a).

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised directly by five adults during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Photographic identification and a CV were not on file for one adult employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) Photographic identification and a CV are now on file for the staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic identification document and CV.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 16(1)(a).

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 two entrance doors to the two service buildings were secured and managed by the staff members to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. Necklaces and chains are removed if a child is observed to be wearing them.

There was documentary evidence available that daily indoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

The staff members supervised the children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Staff members were observed washing their hands during the morning.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of used tissues and waste. Nappy changing facilities were available in the service.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Cleaning schedules were maintained for the two care room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practices when administering medication in the service. There were no children attending who required medication to be administered while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

A comfortable rest area was available in the two care rooms for any child who wished to have a rest or take a break from activities for a while.

Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The two entrance gates in the two outdoor play areas used by rooms 1 and 2 were not sufficiently secured to prevent unauthorised entry to the two external play areas.

An immediate action notice in respect of the security of the outdoor areas was issued to the registered provider by the Early Years Inspector on 3 June 2025.

2. Visibility strips were not in place on the patio doors in room 2 which created a potential risk of injury to a child if they failed to recognise the glass.

Infection Control:

3. There were no splash backs in place at the sinks in the sanitary area used by room 2 to ensure effective cleaning for infection control purposes.
4. The nappy change mat was not stored in a closed container/ bag for infection control purposes in the sanitary area used by room 1.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Two coded padlocks were purchased and placed on both back gates to provide more secure outdoor areas for the children. Staff members ensure that these coded locks are on the gates during the hours that the children are on the premises. Staff members do regular checks throughout the morning, such as before the children enter the service and before they go outside. It was also added to our morning risk assessment of the service.
2. Visibility strips were purchased and placed on the patio doors to prevent injuries to the children. Extra strips are available to replace if they are removed from the glass. This has been added to the morning risk assessment of the service.

Infection Control:

3. Splash backs have been placed and sealed on the wall behind the sink for effective cleaning and infection control purposes. This has been added to the daily risk assessment of the service.
4. The nappy change mat is placed in a sealed bag and hung up for infection control purposes in the sanitary area. This is added to the daily risk assessment of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographs of the secured gates; checklist document.
2. Photograph of the visibility strips applied.

Infection Control:

3. Photograph of the splashback; checklist document.
4. Photograph of the nappy change mat; checklist document

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The manager ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the two care rooms.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The manager ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' visit to the service was documented in the visitor's log
- (4) The manager confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) There was a person who was trained in in first aid response (FAR) present and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the two care rooms.
 - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the staff members caring 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 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 written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 30 May 2025.
 - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in September 2024, and the smoke alarm were last serviced on 20 August 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the two buildings.

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

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas and in the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 24 children.