

# TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015LH097

**Name of Service:** The Playroom Project

**Address of Service:** Mullaharlin Park  
Dublin Road  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth A91 X28F

**Email Address:** leona@womensaidlkc.net

**Name of Registered Service Provider:** John Moloney

**Type of service registered:** Full Day Care

**Date(s) of Inspection:** 2 4 0 2 2 0 2 1

**No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:** AM 17

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Tusla Early Years Inspectorate  
180-189 Lakeshore Drive  
Airside Business Park  
Swords  
Co Dublin

**Inspection undertaken by:** M Bermingham  
**Title:** Early Years Inspector

## Areas which were the subject of this Inspection

Governance (limited)	Safety
----------------------	--------

## 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

# TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

<b>Description of Service</b>	<p>This full day care and part time service is non-profit and is located in a residential area of Dundalk. It offers care and education for children aged between 1 and 6 years and is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. A sessional service is also offered whereby eligible children avail of the state funded Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 3 hours per day over 38 weeks of the year. The building from which the service operates from is a purposely renovated 2 storey building with 4 dedicated care rooms, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waddler room: 1 to 2 years</li> <li>• Toddler room: 2 to 3 years</li> <li>• Preschool room 2: 3 to 4 years</li> <li>• Preschool room 1: 4 to 5 years</li> </ul> <p>The building also features a front entrance lobby and reception area, a kitchen, and facilities for sanitary, laundry and storage. A second office and staff room are located upstairs. Outdoor play areas for the different age-groups of children are positioned to the back and to one side of the building.</p>
<b>Staffing</b>	<p>There were 17 adults present on the day of inspection and of these 14 were working directly with the children. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection.</p>
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>Tusla’s Early Years Inspectorate (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.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information obtained through examination of documentation</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> <li>• Discussion with relevant staff</li> </ul> <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on the regulation areas of Governance (to a limited extent) and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas if required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise an inspector’s time in a service in line with current public health guidance in the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, a sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. The samples chosen on this this inspection were the Waddler room and the Preschool 2 room.</p> <p>The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including: clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.</p> <p>The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.</p>
<b>Additional Information</b>	<p>A referral was made to the county Fire Safety Officer in relation to the provision of an internal sleep room located off the Waddler room.</p>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<p>The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.</p>

## GOVERNANCE

### 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—

(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

(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:

(2)(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of all staff members and the registered provider.

(7)(a) Staff members were provided with information and re-induction training on revised policies and procedures for reopening and operating the service during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is evidenced as follows:

- certificates of completion of *Covid 19 Return to Work* training
- an addendum to staff contracts containing revisions in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic including a detailed staff induction checklist
- staff members consistently described the contents of staff meetings held via an online platform in June and November 2020
- when asked, staff members accurately described relevant public health and sector specific guidance and provisions in relation to Covid-19, as outlined by the *national Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC)*

### 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:

Written policies and procedures containing revisions for the reopening and operation of the service during the current Covid-19 pandemic were submitted to the inspectorate by the registered provider prior to the inspection. On reviewing the documents and in discussion with the registered provider it was found that appropriate updates were reviewed, developed, approved, and distributed by the registered provider. Relevant items included

- a completed self-assessment checklist
- an infection control policy revised in line with the national *Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC)* guidance for cleaning schedules and mouthed toys protocol,
- a health and safety return to work protocol

## Part III - Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service

- a risk management document
- an incident plan
- appropriate procedures for handwashing, drop off and collection of children, cleaning, and infection control.

## 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:

- 1) During the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with pre-school aged children attending the service. In total, 14 adults were directly caring for 17 pre-school children.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct on arrival at the service at 10.00am and remained correct at all times throughout the duration of the inspection as follows:
- The Waddler room: 3 adults cared for 2 children aged from 1 year 6 months to 2 years 3 months
  - The Toddler room: 4 adults cared for 3 children aged from 2 years to 2 years 10 months
  - Preschool room 2: 3 adults cared for 4 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 9 months
  - Preschool room 1: 4 adults cared for 8 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 10 months

## 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 entering the building, the front entrance door was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access.

Cleaning agents and equipment were stored safely in locked storerooms. Cleaning detergents and hand sanitisers were stored on high shelves in children's rooms.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

An outing took place during the inspection whereby 3 children and 3 staff members went on a walk to see farm animals. The children were secured in buggies and appropriate protocols were observed to be in place to ensure children's safety on the outing.

#### **INFECTION CONTROL:**

Staff members were found to be knowledgeable of both public health and operational guidance associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. This was evidenced when staff accurately described symptoms of Covid-19, the procedure in place in the event of not feeling well, self-isolation requirements, procedures in the event of a child or staff member presenting with symptoms, and identification of a dedicated isolation area.

The service took appropriate measures to mitigate against the spread of infection within the service as follows:

- There were 4 separate pods in operation and an adequate number of staff were observed to be allocated to one pod to cover breaks
- The Waddler and Toddler rooms had separate dedicated outdoor play areas
- Access to the shared outdoor area and equipment for the 2 pre-school rooms was staggered and staff described appropriate cleaning measures for the environment and equipment between pod use
- Kitchen staff were observed to deliver food to the room door instead of entering

A dedicated isolation facility was available in the entrance lobby to accommodate a staff member or child who might show symptoms of Covid-19.

There was an adequate supply of PPE such as gloves, masks and aprons available throughout the service including in the isolation room. There was a surplus supply of PPE in storage. Staff members wore masks throughout the inspection.

The toys, materials and equipment in the sampled room were in a clean and hygienic condition. Toys available to the children could be adequately cleaned. When asked, staff stated that toys were cleaned weekly on Fridays. Adequate protocols were in place to ensure mouthing toys were not transferred between children. Staff also described adequate protocols for managing sensory type materials such as playdough and sand. Cleaning schedules for toys were displayed and appropriately documented and updated.

The surface areas and the environments in the sampled rooms, the associated sanitary facilities, and the building in general were in a clean and hygienic condition.

Ventilation was provided by way of open windows throughout the premises and by mechanical ventilation in internal sanitary facilities.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

The service had adequate handwashing facilities. There was running hot water (in line with appropriate temperature guidance), liquid soap, and paper hand towels in the sampled rooms and in the Toddler sanitary accommodation. Staff members were familiar with requirements for children to wash hands and appropriate procedures were posted on the walls adjacent to sinks. Multiple hand sanitiser gel stations were provided throughout the premises.

An adequate supply of disposable paper tissues was available in all rooms.

When asked, staff members described appropriate procedures for cleaning, sterilising and storing children's soothers and bottles in a manner that prevents cross-contamination.

The service has implemented appropriate measures to maintain distancing to prevent the spread of infection in line with public health guidance as follows:

- When asked, staff members described appropriate management of the arrival and collection of children
- signage reminders to social distance were posted at the front entrance. Also, a staff member described being tasked with the job of reminding adults to maintain distance
- staff breaks were confined to 15 minutes and the staff break room was sectioned using Perspex panels. Additionally, one staff member described sitting in the car for breaks.

There was evidence to demonstrate that the service took practical measures to prevent a person with symptoms of Covid-19 from entering the premises by restricting visits from external persons. Records were available to demonstrate that parents confirm their child does not have symptoms of Covid-19 on arrival each morning; similar records were available for staff.

The service maintains complete and accurate daily records of attendance for all children and adults who are grouped together in the service to support contact tracing if required.

Cots, beds or bed linen are not shared between children. A staff member described appropriate procedures and responsibility for regular washing, drying and storing of bed linen to prevent cross infection. Children have a change of clothes available to limit the risk of transmission of infection if in contact with bodily fluids.

#### **SAFE SLEEP:**

While no children were sleeping on the day of inspection, staff members adequately described national best practice for safe sleep for the prevention of sudden infant death. These include carrying out sleep check observations every 10 minutes that note children's colour, breathing pattern and position; records of same were

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

	<p>available. Additionally, procedural guidance from the national organisation for safe sleep <i>First Light</i> were posted on walls of the sleep room.</p>
<p>Non-Compliance Information:</p>	<p><b>GENERAL SAFETY:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The outdoor play area for the preschool rooms had an exit leading to an external public green area and road. The exit route comprised of an inner and outer gate, both of which were unsecured and openable by a preschool child. This poses a risk of a child exiting unsupervised and of an unauthorised persons gaining access to the service.</li> <li>2. In the outdoor play area for the preschool rooms safety surface tiles were in place. There were multiple instances where the tiles were bubbled up causing trip hazards and posing a risk of injury to a child. This risk was heightened due to the proximity of the trip hazards to a wall.</li> </ol> <p><b>INFECTION CONTROL:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Open bins were in use in the sanitary accommodation for Toddlers instead of required lidded foot pedal bins. This poses an infection control risk for children.</li> </ol> <p><b>SAFE SLEEP:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The air temperature of the sleep room, when taken at 12.30, read at 21.2°C, 21.7°C and 23°C at different points within the room. These readings are above the recommended room temperature of 16-20°C under national safe sleep guidelines. This non-compliance was also noted on a previous inspection dated 30 June 2016. When brought to the attention of a staff member it was confirmed that the fan for the ventilation system in the sleep room was not working.</li> </ol>
<p>Corrective &amp; preventive actions submitted by the registered provider:</p>	<p>The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions were carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A locksmith was contacted to move the locks higher. The situation was risk assessed. The gates must be kept unlocked as it is a fire exit. As always, staff ensure children do not have access to the gates by supervision and monitoring. All rooms which children occupy have keypad security operated doors preventing access from the outside.</li> <li>2. The garden surface situation was risk assessed. Screws have been placed down to level the surface where possible. Work is scheduled in July to have the area completely resurfaced.</li> <li>3. Open bins have been removed from the building. Going forward, only foot pedal bins will be used.</li> </ol>

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

	<p>4. The fan in the sleep room is turned on every day to ensure the temperature is regulated. The temperature is checked and recorded daily. If the room becomes too warm the window will be opened.</p>
<p>Summary Comment:</p>	<p>The registered provider submitted the following documentary evidence in relation to Regulation 23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A photograph of the identified gate showing the bolt located near the top of the gate</li> <li>• Two photographs showing a sample of safety surface tiles screwed into the ground</li> <li>• A lidded foot pedal-operated bin</li> <li>• A photograph of the fan switch powered on in the sleep room and a photograph of the room temperature read-out displaying 19°C.</li> </ul> <p>The corrective and preventative actions provided along with the photographic evidence submitted is sufficient to address the non-compliances identified on inspection for points 1, 3 and 4.</p> <p>In respect of Point 2, the description and photographic evidence of the corrective action to reduce the tripping risk is accepted by the inspectorate as an interim measure. The registered provider is required to submit evidence that the non-compliance is permanently addressed when the re-surfacing work is completed. This will also be assessed at the next inspection.</p>