

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH128
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Name of Service:	Wiggly Wonders Playgroup Limited
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Address of Service:	Old National School, Longwood, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A83 H276
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Name of Registered Provider:	Codie Coates
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath.
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray & AM. Cunningham
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).

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Description of service

Wiggly Wonders Playgroup Limited provides a sessional/part-time service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service is situated in the old primary school in Longwood village and consists of 4 care rooms with sanitary facilities and an outdoor space which surrounds the service.

The rooms in the service were as follows:

- The **Blue** room provides care for children from 2 years 6 months to 4 years and operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm.
- The **Yellow** room provides care for children from 3 to 4 years and operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm.
- The **Red** room provides care and education to children from 4 to 5 years and operates from 9 to 12 am.
- The **School aged** room which provides an after school service.

Staffing

The registered provider employed a designated person in charge, 4 childcare staff and 1 school aged staff. A student who is studying the Early Childhood Care and Education programme was availing of placement 2 days a week. The registered provider was available in the service to provide support but does not provide direct care to 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

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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.

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 registered provider, designated person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

(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 had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

There were no new staff members employed in the service since the last inspection.

(2) (a)(b) Sixteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 8 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

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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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the correct adult/child ratio was maintained. There was the designated person in charge and 4 childcare staff members providing direct care to the 37 pre-school children. The registered provider was available to provide support to the staff if needed.
- The **Blue** room had 1 staff member with 9 children ranging in age from 3 to 4 years all attending on a sessional basis.
 - The **Red** room had 2 staff members with 12 children ranging in age from 4 to 5 years, 11 children attending on a sessional basis with 1 child attending on a part-time basis.
 - The **Yellow** room had 2 staff members with 16 children ranging in age from 2.6 to 4 years, 12 children attending on a sessional basis with 4 children attending on a part-time basis.
- (8)(a) According to the staff roster the registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation.

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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 in the service:

Basic Needs of the Infants and Children:

- There was a relaxed and calm atmosphere in the service and the adults were observed to speak kindly and respectfully to the children. The staff worked well together and supported each other during transitions. Children sought out staff members who readily acknowledged and praised the children's efforts and accomplishments.
- Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and gentle reminders regarding hand washing.
- Children were observed engaging in tabletop activities, art and crafts and free play with children afforded the opportunity to choose and change activities if they so wish. The curriculum was child led with the themes of the week in the Yellow and Blue rooms being "Planet Earth," "Monsters" and "Dinosaurs" with the children doing arts and crafts to reflect these themes. The children in the Red room were preparing for their upcoming end of year graduation.

Supporting relationships around children:

- At snack time jovial conversation was heard between the staff members and children. The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes. Children were given advance reminders to support transitions to a new activity and for snack times.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging. Engagement with families and parents was facilitated by the daily sharing of information at drop off and collection which was supported by electronic means.

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- Staff members stated that regular staff meetings were held to discuss the needs of the children and also to ensure that the staff work together to achieve the same goals.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats and cushions were available in all rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. There were no children requiring a sleep attending the service however a sleep mat was available if required.
- (3)(a) The outdoor space consisted of artificial grass, soft mats, cement and tarmac surfaces enclosed by walls with secure gates. A partially sheltered area permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- All care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books. All play materials and equipment were easily accessible on open shelving at the children's height which encouraged active engagement and involvement.

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- The equipment in the outdoor area included slides, climbing tunnel, plastic kitchen with play equipment. Additional equipment such as ride on toys, cars and tractors were stored in a shed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children brought their own healthy lunch and drinks from home with additional hot and cold snacks available in the service for the children staying until 2pm.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The door to the service had to be opened by a staff member and the outdoor areas were enclosed by walls with secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Liquid soap, warm water and hand paper towels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Items of food in children's lunch boxes which required refrigeration were stored in a fridge. This reduced the risk of bacterial growth in these food items.

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- The premises was in a clean condition with up-to-date documented cleaning schedules available.

Fire Safety:

The following Fire Safety practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- All emergency exit doors were accessible in the event of an evacuation.
- Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record of the fire drills that took place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 27/03/2026.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers and the smoke alarms was dated 19/08/2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 66 children. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2026 to the 27/03/2027.