

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO037		
Name of Service:	Little People's Playworld Creche		
Address of Service:	Unit 3, Finisklin Industrial Estate, Sligo, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 C2FF		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jackie Mahon		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	12/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM 24
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello and L McGlynn		
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

Little People's Playworld Creche is a privately owned and operated preschool service located within an industrial estate in Sligo town. The service is registered for the provision of a full day care service for children aged between 0-6 years and operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. The facility is also registered to provide a service to school age children each afternoon. The service operates from a single-story building containing four care rooms, a sleep room, a dining room and a kitchen. A large, secure outdoor play area is located to the side and front of the premises

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the service. There are an additional 8 adults employed to work at the facility. Eight adults have the required qualifications in Early Childhood care and education and one adult is employed to work in the Kitchen.

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, 15, 22, 23,25, 26, 27 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19. 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, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. The deputy person was in charge on the day of inspection

(2) (a) (b).

There are eight staff members employed in the service and one new staff member since the service last inspection which will be the focus of this review.

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the recently employed adult.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine adults employed 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)
International police vetting was not required for the newly employed adult employed in the service as they had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)
The adult had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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

(8) (a)
The registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times throughout the operation of the preschool service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The required adult to child ratios were not maintained in the care rooms at all times throughout the inspection as evidenced by the following.

- From approximately 10.40am to 10.56am, one adult cared for 11 children in preschool 2 room. There were nine children aged 3 years and two of the children were aged 2 years. Two adults were required in the room during this time to maintain appropriate adult child ratios.
- From 12.05pm until 13.33pm in the little dreamer's room, one staff member was caring for seven children. Three children were aged 1-2 years, and four children were aged 2-3 years. Three children were in standard cots and four children on floor beds. Two adults were required to meet the adult child ratios of 1:5 for children aged 1-2 years of age and 1:6 for children aged 2-3 years of age.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff were notified that normal ratios apply unless they're registered under the ECCE scheme.

Our sleep policy has been updated, and all staff have been made aware that ratios apply even during sleep time. Sleep rota and lunch rota has been amended to facilitate this, and a new member of staff have been employed to ensure that staff cover is available.

Supporting documentation submitted

Minutes of meeting submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-g,i)

Ten records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child and emergency contact were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspectors.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (h)

The service did not have a record of immunisations if any received by a preschool child in the ten records sampled.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Parents have been informed that when our new child records go out in August, they will now need to include child immunisations. Child record will contain childhood immunisation form.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now complaint and will be checked on next inspection.

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

Drinking water was available to the preschool child in all care rooms with hydration stations available throughout the day.

Morning snack was provided by service and consisted of a variety of fruit where children had the opportunity to choose what fruit they wanted. The evening snack was provided by home and consisted of yoghurts, crackers and a variety of sandwiches.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The main meal served on the day of inspection was not nutritionally balanced and consisted of rice with a powdered curry sauce mix. Baskets containing mixed frozen vegetables were available and staff offered portions to children should they choose to take some. There was no protein source included in the meal.

A review of the four-week menu plan for the service and the records completed by staff on children's meals demonstrated an overreliance on high processed, convenience foods. This non-compliance was identified on previous inspections in 2021 and 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have met and discussed the inclusion of protein on a daily basis, and an overall change of the menus is in the works. The management structure will review the menus along with the Healthy Food Pyramid quarterly to ensure meals are sufficiently nutritious.

Supporting documentation submitted

Minutes of meeting with chef submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant and will be reviewed on next 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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor play area perimeter was secure.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play in all care rooms and dining room.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules in place.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and when discussed with staff they were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with a total of four standard cots.
- The sleep room temperature measured 20.0°C on the day of inspection which is line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained unobstructed on the day of the inspection.
- Fire evacuation plans were clearly displayed on the walls in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- (1) There was a sofa in the 'big room' which was torn exposing the fabric underneath which could not be adequately cleaned.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Couch in the big room was removed for alterations. Bean bags were sourced, and temporarily soft areas were put in place until suitable furniture can be sourced.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now complaint

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 registered provider demonstrated with certification that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times while children attend the preschool service.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box clearly visible to staff in the central lobby.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (b) The first aid box did not contain a sufficient quantity of in date recommended contents for the numbers of children registered to attend the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The items that were found to be out of date were purchased within the next couple of days. Periodic checks will take place on the First Aid press to ensure equipment is within date.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now complaint

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 written record of fire drills was documented as having taken place in the service. A sample of these records were reviewed which showed that the last recorded fire drill carried out for the service was dated 18 April 2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms located in the pre-school. Firefighting equipment was last serviced/inspected on 8 November 2024 and the service had a written record confirming that the fire alarm system was serviced and tested on 15 April 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was prominently displayed in hallway and in the care rooms.

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

In the outdoor play area children were supervised mainly by sight as the adults caring for them positioned themselves to ensure all children were in view. In the care rooms where adults worked in teams, they were observed to communicate well ensuring that all children could be always supervised.

Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasant experience for children, where the adults sat beside the children encouraging to try meals and offering support if children required assistance.

Non-Compliance Information

1. On numerous occasions throughout the inspection children were observed in the main corridor moving between rooms or using the toilet facilities without adult supervision. The exit point to the building was

controlled by a magnetic locking mechanism on the door with a push button release in the main corridor. The push button was located at a height accessible to the older preschool children therefore posing the risk that, in times when children were unsupervised in the area, they could potentially use the push button to open the main door and exit the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The push button system has been placed higher up to adult level.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of push release button moved.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The Registered provider provided certification of adequate insurance for 40 children in a full day care preschool service till the 27 March 2026.

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-

(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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b) A various times throughout the inspection, one staff member was observed to engage in a manner that was not age appropriate, respectful, or encouraging for children. The staff member communicated with children only to correct their behaviour and there was no praise or encouragement for children who complied with the staff members instruction. The interactions observed did not promote the development of positive relationships between staff and children and the staff member missed valuable opportunities to engage in sustained, purposeful interactions with children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The RP met with the staff in question and is has been agreed the staff will undergo additional training in positive behaviour management. The staff will also be supervised closely to ensure the interactions with the children are of a positive nature. Staff participated in a positive behaviour course on the 23rd June 2025. All staff will complete yearly training on positive behaviour management. The RP will monitor staff interactions to ensure these remain positive and give encouragement and direction when they are not.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certification of training and minutes of meeting submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now complaint. This will be reviewed on next inspection.