

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:	20/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM 15
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, K Folan		
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

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 Thursday and 7.45am to 5.15pm on Fridays. The facility is also registered to provide a service to school age children each afternoon. The service operates from a single-story building containing five 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 7 staff employed to work at the facility. There is a staff employed to prepare, cook and serve meals to the children each day.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11- Staffing levels,

Regulation 19- Health welfare and development of the child.

Regulation 23- Safety

Regulation 32- Complaints

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27- supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

Regulation 10- Policies and Procedures,

Regulation 16(k) - Records in Relation to preschool service (accident and incident)

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Pandas vs Stich room and Toddlers.

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

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate on 16th of June 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*

(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.

(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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person available to deputise as required. The person in charge was available throughout the inspection.

(2) (a) (b)

On the day of inspection, the person in charge confirmed that there were nine named adults who worked in the service. One of these adults had commenced working in the service since the last inspection. A review of records demonstrated that the vetting documentation for eight adults had been reviewed during a previous inspection and were found to be compliant. Recruitment records in respect of the newly recruited adult were reviewed, and the following information was available:

One written and verified past employer references and one written and verified reference from a source other than a past employer was available.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine adults 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 as the adult had not resided outside the state for a period of six months or more.

(4)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(9) (7)(a)

- The service could not provide evidence of induction provided to a newly recruited member of staff. It is acknowledged that the staff member stated that an induction was provided and they were sent policies and procedures but could not provide evidence of same.

- Written records of staff supervision occurring in the service over the past twelve months could not be provided on the day. The registered provider informed inspectors on the day that they do not document supervision meetings anymore, this is in contradiction to the service supervision policy as it states; *'The supervision session is recorded by the supervisor and the record kept in accordance with good practice, legislation and regulation in the office...'*

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(9) (7) (a)

- Induction for new member of staff was located after the inspection. A refresh with the staff member was carried out.

A staff discussion took place, and all staff were advised that supervision reports will be documented again

Supporting documentation submitted

- Copy of induction submitted.
- Minutes of staff 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 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

A review of the following policies was conducted and deemed to be compliant:

- (b) Complaints policy
- (e) Policy on managing behaviour.
- (h) Inclusion policy
- (j) Policy on accidents and incidents.
- (t) Staff supervision 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.

Compliance Information

(1)
There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were six adults working directly with 25 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and six adults working directly with 15 children in the afternoon.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of 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, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1) (k)

An incident and accident book was in place in the service to document all accidents and incidents involving a preschool child.

(2) (b)

The registered provider is aware of the statutory requirement to retain all records for a period of two years from when the child attends the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (k)

A recent incident in was not documented in the accident and incident book. This is in contradiction to the service policy where it states that:

'...records are kept of significant incidents to include, child's name, time and location of incident, events leading up to the incident, nature of incident, others involved, witness, how the situation was handled, whether restraint was used, what form of restraint, consequences and parent /guardian's signature...'

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(1) (k)

The recent incident was recorded in the behaviour log and was updated to the accident and incident book after the inspection. A discussion with staff took place to remind them to record all incidents in the accident and incident book as outlined in the service policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documented incident 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 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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- The service provided adequate opportunities for a child to experience all types of play with materials and resources to support role and imaginary play, construction play with building blocks cars and trucks, sensory play with water tables and sand tables. Tabletop activities, puzzles and jigsaws facilities fine motor skill development, while arts and crafts supported the child's creativity.
- The outdoor area contained ample space for the children to run, jump and cycle outside. Children energetically participated in a game of football. The environment supported the preschools child gross motor skill development with jungle gyms, slides, swings and balance tyres. Ride on toys, push and pull toys and open-ended materials were available to the children outdoors. Parasol umbrellas were provided for shade as weather on the day was sunny.
- Children were supported at mealtimes with the staff members sitting alongside the children, chopping up food as necessary and assisting the preschool child if required.
- Children were assisted to clean their hands and faces after mealtimes.
- Nappy changes took place regularly and promptly when required and were handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Nappy changing time was used as a time for warm one to one interaction between staff and the children.

- The weather on the day of inspection was very warm and sunny, sun cream was applied as required. The staff ensured that the children wore sun hats and limited the time that the children were exposed to the sun during the day.
- The service had a healthy eating policy in place. Dinner on the day was shepherd's pie with broccoli with fruit served in the afternoon.

Non-Compliance Information

(19) (1) (b)

- A log of behavioural incidents were maintained by the service and a sample of these were reviewed. A response to an incident logged was in contradiction to the service policy on managing behaviour where on a date noted food was withheld as a consequence for a child not listening to staff members. This is in contradiction the service behavioural management policy which states that prohibited practices include: *'Children are never ignored, spoken to sarcastically, humiliated, segregated or have food withheld.'*
- This inspection was triggered on information received to the inspectorate where a child placement was terminated due to ongoing concerns of the child's behaviour. Evidence of an individualised behaviour support plan could not be sourced on the day. This is at variance with the services behaviour management policy where it outlines steps taken to support a child *where 'a child's serious behaviour issues are causing disruption and problems for other children in the group'*. This includes developing an *'individualised plan that takes a positive learning approach'*.
- On discussion with staff members the support needs of another child attending the wobbler room was discussed, the staff members were knowledgeable about the needs required to support this child. However no formal support plan was in place to support this child, which is in contradiction to the services policy on managing behaviour.
- A child receiving support under the access inclusion model (AIM) did not have the required inclusion plan in place. These plans are required to ensure the child's safety, learning and development needs were provided for within the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

- A discussion with staff was held about with-holding food and snacks from children. Staff were reminded that our policies have been updated since the incident and what is expected of them going forward. All staff have completed behaviour management training. We will ensure all staff are aware of our policies and procedures.
- Individualised support plans were printed off and introduced to all staff again. We will ensure all staff are aware of the behavioural support plans in place within the service.
- A support plan to meet the child's individual needs was reintroduced. Management will ensure that staff are aware of who has a support plan and where it is located.
- An inclusion plan was located and management will ensure that any child receiving AIMS will have an Inclusion Plan implemented as early as possible and kept in the AIMS folder.

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Supporting documentation submitted

- Minutes of staff meeting submitted.
- Individualised behaviour support plans submitted.
- Individualised support plan submitted.
- Inclusion plan 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 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:

- A fence was erected to secure an exit route from a room to the car park in the service.
- Parents were contacted to inform them to collect their young children from the service as they could not safely put children to sleep due to the high temperatures of 26.0°C being recorded in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An exit door from the school aged care room was not secure on the 30th of May 2025, where one preschool child managed to open the door and exit to the car park.
2. The main door was open the day of inspection at the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service and the inspectors gained access to the service. It is acknowledged all the children were in the outdoor play area at this time.
3. A tyre in the outdoor area was secured to the ground with concrete and not covered in a shock absorbing surface material to protect children from injury.
4. The service safeguarding policy statement referenced a policy for 'dealing with allegations of abuse or neglect against employees and the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers or volunteers of a child availing of the service'. However, this policy and procedure could not be sourced on the day posing a risk to the preschool child if the required safety procedures were not implemented.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In a written response the registered provider stated:

- (1) The exit door was locked on the day of the incident. A fence has been erected to ensure nobody can exit the premises. Staff will ensure the door is locked appropriately.
- (2) Staff were reminded of the importance of ensuring the main door is locked at all times.
- (3) Shock absorbing mats were installed around the tyre.

(4) The complaints policy was altered to match the child safeguarding statement. Going forward policies will be reviewed to ensure they correspond.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Minutes of team meeting submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Policy 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 reviewed on next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b) (c)

The service had a complaints policy in place that was made available to the inspectors on the day. This policy outlined the services response to complaints both verbal and written received to the service. The policy outlines how to make a complaint, the procedure the service follows and how the complainant is kept up to date with the outcome of the investigation.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

The service did not demonstrate compliance with their complaints policy as follows:

- The service policy stated that *'All complaints both formal and informal will be recorded in detail.....Records will be stored in a complaints file and retained for two years'*. There was no complaints file available in the service on the day. Minutes of a meeting with a parent in December 2024 referenced two complaints. There was no record of these complaints or the investigation into these complaints.
- A complaint received by the service verbally and submitted to the inspectorate was not recorded or investigated at the time of the inspection.

(3) (a) (b)

There was no written record of any complaint in the service for the previous two years available to the inspectors on the day. This is contrary to records of meetings reviewed on the day where concerns had been raised to the person in charge.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provide stated:

(2) (a) (b)

- The complaints folder was located following the inspection. The registered provider informed staff that any discussion based on issues arising and brought to her attention, even though spoken about will be documented and addressed. These will be stored in the complaints file.

The correspondence from the incident was added to the folder where the investigation was still on-going

- The complaint made verbally by parent was typed up post inspection. We will ensure that the complaints folder is easily located within the office and management know where to locate it. Any concerns/complaints from staff or parents will be documented and stored within the folder accordingly.

(3) (a) (b)

Any concerns/complaints from staff or parents will be documented and stored within the folder accordingly.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Record of complaint submitted.
- Minutes of staff 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 VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

The service did not ensure that the preschool children attending the service were supervised at all times as follows:

- At approximately 13:26, all children were brought into the panda’s vs stich room to have a snack. 15 children in the room were being supervised by four staff members, when the inspector observed one boy leaving the room unnoticed. The child remained in an adjacent room until 13:29 when the inspector checked on them. A staff member entered the room at 13:30 and brought the child back into the main care room and closed the door.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

- A discussion with staff took place and staff were reminded to ensure extra supervision as children are transitioning between rooms. Staff were reminded to close doors and observe in a case a child exits the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Minutes of meeting submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

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.