

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD064
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Name of Service:	Play Together Creche
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Address of Service:	4 Carn Glas Court, Gracedieu, Waterford City.
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Eircode:	X91 KC8P
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rebekah Donnelly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	06/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
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Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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Title:	Early years inspector
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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

The service is based in a residential area on the outskirts of Waterford city. There are three care rooms (the Baby room, the Wobbler Room and the Toddler room), a kitchen, sleep rooms, sanitary areas for both staff and children and an office. The outdoor space is adjacent to the building and has direct access from the Wobbler room. The service is registered to care for up to 38 children aged between 0 to 6 years of age. It operates from 07:30 to 17:45, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The service employs 12 staff members. On the day of the inspection, 8 staff cared for 30 children with 2 members of the management team available for support if required. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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:

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 16(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service;

Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials;

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15(1) Record of Preschool Child and Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service.

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

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 6th of February 2025 regarding a non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 First Aid. The registered provider submitted an adequate response to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate on the 7th of February 2025 to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliance.

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

(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.

(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)(c)

The person in charge remained on the premises during the inspection. A member of the management team arrived at the service during the morning and remained there throughout the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service and was not present on the day. The person in charge confirmed they or the manager is always present during hours of operation. The names and photographs of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge were on display in the foyer of the service.

(2) The inspector reviewed 12 staff files.

(a)(b)

Validated references were available for all staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were on file for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years in all cases.

(d)

Police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived outside of the state for a person of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

Evidence was available on the day to demonstrate that all staff members who work directly with children held a qualification at the minimum level 5 or above on the National Qualification Framework or qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

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)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service. There were 8 staff members working directly with 30 children. Two additional staff were available in a supernumerary capacity to assist in the rooms if required.

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.*

Non-Compliance Information

A sample of seven children's registration forms were reviewed. Of these forms, four were not fully completed. The emergency contact details, records of children's immunisations and a child's doctor's contact details had not been recorded on these forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the management team are responsible for ensuring the children's registration forms are complete. These forms have been amended to include a section for parents to state they have chosen not to have their child vaccinated. The registered provider stated that the forms will be reviewed and signed by a member of the management team prior to the commencement of the child in the service. A secondary check will be made on the day the child starts in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated registration form as submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next 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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)
(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)
On review of the records concerning the preschool service details (a) to (i), all information was available to the inspector.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of the accident and incident details and the medication records were not completed fully.

(j) Of the 24 medication forms reviewed, 11 were not completed in full.

(k) Of the seven accident and incident forms reviewed, four were not completed in full.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(j)(k)

The registered provider has stated that they have created a new procedure for the completion of forms for the administration of medication and the recording of accidents and incidents. The staff team are now required to read and agree with these procedures. They stated that a copy of these new procedures is on display in the care rooms. The registered provider stated that a member of the management team will be responsible to review all reports at the end of each week.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted a copy of the signed statement by the staff team to demonstrate they have read and understood the new procedures and a copy of the audit document.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the 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:

On the inspector's arrival at the service, the entrance was secured to prevent unsupervised entrance or exit from the service.

- The weekly roster was available for review by the inspector.
- Water was thermostatically controlled at a temperature of no more than 43°C.
- Cleaning sprays were stored out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and lidded bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary area.
- Staff and children were observed to clean their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the toilets.
- Up-to-date cleaning checklists were displayed in each room.
- Children had their individual baskets with their nappies, creams and change of clothes.
- Soothers were stored in individual airtight containers.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep records were carried out regularly.
- Sleep in the Baby room was child-led. The staff described how once children showed signs of tiredness, they were prepared for sleep but there was no set schedule.
- Reminders of how to place a child in a cot to promote safe sleep were displayed in the sleep rooms.
- The cot room was maintained at a comfortable temperature while the children slept. The cot room temperature recorded at 11:15 was 19.7°C.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

Fire drills were not carried out monthly. This creates a risk of a delay in evacuation in case of an emergency. On a review of the fire drill records, drills were carried out on the 16th of September 2024, the 13th of November 2024 and the 15th of January 2025. The fire safety policy stated that fire drills would be carried out monthly.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that a copy of the fire policy has been posted on the employee portal and the management team will ensure that fire drills will be carried out monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted a copy of a fire drill completed in February 2025.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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

The children were cared for in three rooms, the Baby room, the Wobbler room and the Toddler room. Each room was equipped with low shelving, containers and baskets which allowed children to access toys and equipment independently. The rooms were well-resourced and used furniture and floor coverings to create definite areas of interest, for example, the baby room had an area with soft carpeting for the crawling babies and a space with wipeable flooring for dinner time and messy play.

The equipment available to the children was suitable for their age and stage of development. The baby room had a ball pool for the children to crawl and play in and the Wobbler room had clear floor space for the children to comfortably use the push-and-pull toys. The Toddler room had clear areas of interest laid out for the children, with a construction area, table-top materials with tables and chairs nearby for easy access, and a home corner and small world toys for imaginative play.

Each area in the rooms was well-resourced with accessories to enhance the children's play experiences. Children's identity and belonging in each room were fostered with family photographs, birthday walls and personalised baskets with their belongings.

Children's artwork was displayed and was evidence of the planned programme. For example, in the baby room photographs of the children playing instruments, and artwork of instruments created by the children supported the written programme displayed for the month.

Each room had a cosy area with soft furnishings placed away from the main play space if the children required time away from the large group. The cot room was darkened with white noise gently playing which created a restful area for the children. The cots were of a standard size with well-fitting mattresses.

The outdoor area was to the side of the building with direct access from the Wobbler room. There was an artificial surface in this space with a covered area which allowed children to play outdoors during bad weather. The outdoor area had a large climbing unit with a slide, wheeled toys, a play kitchen and low stools. Children were observed using the space during the day.

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

(2) The first aid box was prominently displayed in the main hallway of the building and was available to the staff at any time.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in first aid would be immediately available to the children. On the day of the inspection, there was no person trained in first aid rostered to work from 17:00 to 17:30 or to cover breaks throughout the week beginning the 3rd of February 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 6th of February regarding non-compliances identified under this regulation. The registered provider submitted a response to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate on the 7th of February to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliances immediately. The actions submitted stated that the roster has been amended to ensure that a first aid qualified staff member is on the premises at all times. The registered provider has also stated that there is a long-term plan for staff training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence to demonstrate that first aid training for a staff member has been booked for the 27th of February 2025 was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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)(b)

A written record of the fire drills was available for review. Evidence to demonstrate the fire-fighting equipment had been serviced on the 12th of June 2024 and the smoke alarms maintenance was completed on the 31st of October 2024.

(4)

Procedures for the evacuation of the building in case of fire were displayed in each room and the hallways. Each room had a floor plan of the exit paths and a photograph of the assembly area outside of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate displayed demonstrated that the service had insurance for 40 children from the 28th of March 2024 to the 27th of March 2025