

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW169
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Name of Service:	The Park Academy Childcare Eden Gate
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Address of Service:	Edengate, Delgany, Co. Wicklow.
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Eircode:	A63NY22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhla Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	20/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	128	PM	129
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Condon, H.Bourke and S.Faherty
Title:	Early Years Inspectors and Inspection Registration Manager

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

NA

Description of service

This full day care service is located in a residential and business centre on the outskirts of Delgany village, County Wicklow. The service is registered to provide full day-care to pre-school children who are aged between zero and six years of age. The service is registered to open from Monday to Friday between 07.00am and 18.30pm. At present eight rooms are in use to care for pre-school children. Each room has access to a designated outdoor area.

Staffing

A total of thirty-nine adults are employed which includes the manager, two assistant managers and a chef. On the day of inspection twenty-two adults provided direct care to pre-school children. The assistant managers were available to give assistance in the rooms as needed. An area supervisor and cook were also present.

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, supervision and safety. 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 and 25; however, on inspection an additional non-compliance was found under Regulation 19. This finding is 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the Registered Provider on 21/03/2025 in relation to a non-compliance identified Regulation 23, General Safety.

A response from the registered provider was received and accepted 24/03/2025.

Acknowledgements

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, two assistant managers, regional supervisor, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2) Seventeen new staff were employed since the last inspection. These seventeen staff files were reviewed.
- (a)(b) There were two written and validated references available for seventeen staff members.
- (c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for seventeen new staff members.
- The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for seventeen staff members who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
Seventeen staff members who were involved in the direct care of children had 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.

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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children

(2) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were twenty-two adults providing direct care to one hundred and twenty-nine pre-school children who were cared for in eight care rooms. There were two assistant managers present to provide assistance in rooms when needed.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises during the inspection and the staff roster indicated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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:

(g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.

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

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(g)

Ten files were examined.

The records required in writing in relation to the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner was available.

(3)(c) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) (g) was open to inspection on the premises by the inspectors.

Part VI - Safety

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 service has a healthy eating policy. A four-week menu plan was available.

The service provides three meals and two snack daily. A hot lunch of chorizo pasta and Biryani for dinner was enjoyed by the children. Second helpings were available. Drinking water is provided in each care room for the children when thirsty. Crockery and cutlery suitable to the ages of the children in the rooms were provided.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- All cleaning agents were kept out of reach of children.
- Individual care plans were in place for children with specific medical needs where required.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch, after using the toilet and after outdoor play. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures.
- Each child's soother was stored in individual containers and were sterilised daily.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No child received medication during the inspection. The staff members were knowledgeable regarding the procedure to be used if needed and documentation was reviewed which demonstrated that the procedure was adhered to.
- Written parental consent was available should temperature reducing medication be required to be administered to a child.
- All medication was stored in a safe place and was clearly labelled for each individual child.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a sleep log was maintained every 10 minutes by staff detailing the physical checks carried out on sleeping children under 2 years of age.
- The temperature of the sleep room and the care rooms where children slept was in the acceptable range.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed. The procedure for evacuation was on display in each room.
- Records were available of monthly fire drills carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. At 10:45 in the Bunnies room it was observed that a small red plastic ball was available to the babies who were aged between nine and fifteen months. On examination of this ball, it was noted that written on the ball was that it was “not suitable for children under the age of 3 years”. Following conversation with the staff, his ball was immediately removed from the room.

It was evident through conversation with staff in the room and management that there is system in place to check the toys in each room daily to ensure that they are safe. However, this did not prevent an unsuitable toy being available posing a risk to a child of this age group.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 21/03/2024 and a response was received on 24/03/2025.

2. In the Jellytots room an electric fan was on a windowsill near the cosy area which was accessible to children posing a risk as it could be pulled down on top of a child.

Infection Control:

3. The procedure undertaken by a staff member while nappy changing did not demonstrate best practice in relation to infection control. The staff member did not adhere to the service nappy changing procedure and children’s hands were not washed following nappy change.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The red ball was removed from the room immediately by the manager. A daily hazard checklist is carried out each day and a toy audit is now completed monthly by deputy managers and supervisors which includes all toys in the rooms.

2. The electric fan was removed from the room immediately. Going forward when the fan is not in use it will be stored in the storeroom.

Infection Control:

3. All staff have been retrained in the nappy changing procedure.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of daily hazard checklist.

Copy of toy audit list for use by managers monthly.

Copy of record of the retraining of staff members regarding nappy changing procedure and copy of procedure.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in relation to Regulation 23.

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) Adults trained in First Aid Response were present and immediately available to the pre-school children.

(2)

(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the pre-school room.

(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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

The children attending the service were supervised by staff members at all times while indoors and outdoors during the inspection.

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

Non-Compliance Information

In the Little Rascals room, the rest area was inadequate and consisted only of a mat and three small stools. There were no soft furnishings, cushions, chairs or sofas to make it an attractive area for a child to rest or take time out if needed during their day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Rascals rest area has been developed and now consists of soft furnishings, cushions and a seating area. The team leader and management team will monitor this area and will replenish any equipment when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of rest area.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in relation to Regulation 19.