

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016GY001		
Name of Service:	Play Together Plus		
Address of Service:	172 Rosan Glas, Ragoon, Co. Galway		
Eircode:	H91 V3W5		
Name of Registered Provider:	Iwona Sawicka		
Service type:	Full Day Care		
Date of Inspection:	26th of April 2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM 17
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.		
Inspection undertaken by:	F Nic Dhonnacha		
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

Play Together Plus creche is a privately-operated creche located in a residential development, in Knocknacarra West of Galway City. The service operates on a full day care and part-time basis from 08.00-18.00 Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year. The service accommodates children ranging in age from one year to five years. There are three play rooms, these are called the Baby room (age range: one to two years old), the Playroom 1 room (age range: two to three years old), Playroom 2 (E.C.C.E room) (age range: three to five years old) There is a kitchen for the preparation, cooking and storage of meals and snacks and there is a designated outdoor play area for the children to explore and play fun filled activities .

Staffing

A total of nine adults are employed by the service. The registered provider is supernumerary and was not present during the inspection. On the day of inspection five adults and one student over the age of 18 years who was supervised at all times were working directly with the children and one staff member was working in the kitchen preparing, cooking and serving food onsite. Seven staff hold an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification. Staff held records of ongoing engagement in continuing professional development.

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 inspections 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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 18, 19 (1)(a), 20(1)(a)(b) (2)(a), 22, 23, 26, 27, 28 and 29. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times when the pre-school children were present. In addition, there was one adult on a childcare placement who was supervised when caring for the children.
- (2) Since the last inspection on the 13th of July 2021, four new adults had commenced working in the service. All staff files were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Eighteen written references with validations, were available on file for nine adults, from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of the nine adults working in the service.
- (d) Six of seven adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years had the required police vetting.
- (4) Seven adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the seven adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d) One of the seven adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years did not have the required police vetting.

- (4) One adult working directly with children, did not hold a minimum award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 2nd of May the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (d) Police vetting application has been made for one adult. All staff and student files will be checked going forward.
- (4) The adult will work solely in the kitchen only going forward. Relief staff or the registered provider will provide staff cover when necessary.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) (d) No evidence submitted.
- (4) No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance remains outstanding as no evidence has been submitted by the registered provider that police vetting has been obtained.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 23 children present.

- 5 children were aged 1 year to 2 years,
- 10 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 8 children were aged between 3 to 5 years,

There were five adults directly caring for these children, this includes one student over the age of 18 years who was on a childcare work placement and was supervised when interacting with the children.

An additional adult carried out kitchen duties and provided childcare relief when required. Up until 13.00hrs, there were six pre-school children attending the services part time programme.

In the afternoon, on the day of inspection, there were seventeen children present.

- 3 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 8 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 6 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 adults on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (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), (b),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g),(h) and (i).

A sample of 8 of 26 children's enrolment records were reviewed by the early years inspector.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

- The random records of children contained the following:
- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).

- The name and address of the child’s parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
 - Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
 - Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
 - The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
 - A record of any immunisations the child has had.
 - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that each child’s record was kept confidential but was open for inspection in respect of:
- A parent or guardian in relation to their child.
 - An authorised employee designated by the registered provider.
 - An authorised person.
- (4) The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the notice board and available for parents, guardians, employees, unpaid workers, contractors, and authorised persons.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The children sat together and ate their snacks and meals together which were provided by the service.
- The children had plenty of time to enjoy their food in a relaxed and unhurried environment.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Ten children were toilet trained and either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- The staff members supervised children's hand washing before and after snack time, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after messy play, and after outside play.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a competent and positive manner by the staff.
- The children could move about freely in their playroom environment.
- All children had the opportunity to go outside for fresh air and play activities in the designated outdoor play area.
- Water was accessible to the children in each playroom to drink when they were thirsty.
- Powdered infant formula was stored in the service fridge, it was prepared by parents/guardians at home as per best practice guidelines.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

- Following discussion with the staff member in the service, the early years inspector was informed that they provided daily information to parents/guardians regarding their children at drop off and collection times or via a childcare application.

- Each child had a profile scrapbook showing some photographs of various activities engaged in and art and craftwork. Five individual learning stories / records were presented. The learning story provides a narrative of recognizing and describing the learning that is taking place through a child's play. The staff described what the child did and said and provided their observations while linking it with the curriculum and a plan to extend the learning.
- The staff member was observed speaking to the children at their height, listening attentively and responding in a quiet, calm, and sensitive manner.
- The children in the Baby playroom were observed playing with soft toys, looking at books, singing songs, and eating together. The children in Playroom 1 and Playroom 2 were observed predominately playing outside chasing, riding on tricycles, in the play houses, pedalling on cars, using their imagination with the mud kitchen, while others played shop and placed eggs and food items in baskets and shopping trollies, some children played with cars trucks, diggers, buckets and shovels, while others sat and played with sand in the all-weather outdoor unit.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The layout of the three playrooms allowed children to move about freely in a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter. The playrooms were organised in a way to support children’s play and learning while being adequately supervised.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children.
 - Each playroom included items:
 - a home corner, kitchen, with real life items crockery, utensils, and a shop
 - a library with a selection of books, puzzles, games, arts and crafts, a roleplay and dress up area, a construction area with cars trucks and transport vehicles.
 - Displayed at low levels on the walls were visual aids and poster, with themes including, spring, growing together, circle time, emotions, water cycle, the farm, a family wall, children’s handprints, daily routine,
 - All children had opportunities for outdoor play. The area was secure with boundary walls, a gate and was covered with artificial grass and concrete paths.
 - Equipment and materials for outdoor play were stored in the outdoor all-weather sheltered unit. Staff advised toys and play materials were rotated on a regular basis.
 - Items in the outdoor play area included footballs, sand / water basins and utensils, two playhouses, spinners, see saws, mud kitchen, cars, tricycles, seating and tables, blocks, mirrors, arts and crafts, and toy animals were available.
- (b)
- The three playrooms had a cosy rest area with child-size couches, matting and cushions should the children need a rest or a place to relax.

2(a)

Outdoor area

The equipment and materials available provided children with play, movement and exploration opportunities that were exclusive to the outdoors. The outdoor play area was secured by walls, and a gate. Staff advised that children access the outdoor area on a daily basis. The equipment and materials available in the outdoor play area reflect the high quality of the service and provide the children with play movement and exploration opportunities

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

- There was a healthy eating policy available for parents and guardians to view. The foods provided by the service were healthy and nutritious.
- On the day of inspection, the children ate their morning snack and dinner and afternoon snack which varied from chopped fruit, vegetables, chicken casserole, mash potatoes, peas and carrots, fruit and vegetables for afternoon snack and soup and bread and butter for teatime.
- The registered provider ensured that 2 food groups was included daily in the children’s meal s and snacks.
- Drinks of milk and water were offered for each child’s meal / snack time.

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 service was appropriately secured with a keypad, bell operated system at the entrance door. The internal and external entry and exit points prevented children exiting or unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- All storage cupboards were secured, and cleaning agents stored out of reach of the children.
- The materials and equipment throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, a gate, and artificial grass surface.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.
- The temperature in the playrooms was maintained within the recommended room temperature of 18°C - 22°C.
- There was storage in the hallway leading into the service with individually labelled hooks for the children’s coats and bags; thereby preventing a trip hazard.

- There was evidence of daily service attendance records for both staff and children.
- Parents and guardians had been advised of the service's drop off and collection policy.

Infection Control:

- There were 2 wash hand basins and 2 toilets in the sanitary area for the pre-school children to use and one wash hand basin in the corridor and one wash hand basin in each playroom. In addition, there was a staff toilet and wash hand basin adjacent to the back door.
- A supply of tissues was readily available indoors and in the outdoor play area.
- Warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels, pedal operated waste bins were available in the sanitary facilities.
- The staff and children washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included: after messy play, outdoor play and after toileting and prior to mealtime.
- Soothers were labelled and stored individually in containers.
- All toys and materials were easily cleanable and maintained in good condition.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room adjacent to the Baby room which had two cots for children under 2 years of age, sleep provision. Additionally, there were four foldable wooden cots for the baby room which is converted for sleep provision after lunch time, seven stackable beds and two sleep mats were available for older children's sleep provision in Playroom 1 which also is converted for sleep provision after lunch time.
- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness.
- Older children had designated relaxation, chill out time or the children who did not require sleep played in the outdoor play area.
- A pod thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and necessary any remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- The children's designated linen and blankets were individually labelled in the sleep room.
- The required ten-minute sleep record checks were available and maintained on the childcare application by the staff, with observations regarding the sleeping children's, colour, position, breathing, room temperature and any remedial actions taken.

Non-Compliance Information

Safety

1. Trailing leads and cables in each playroom and designated sleep room were not securely fastened and thereby accessible to children, posing a safety risk.

Infection Control

2. The soft seating was frayed and torn and needed repair, in Playroom 1 thus preventing effective cleaning.
3. The service did not have a suitable steriliser for safe sterilising practice of young children's soothers.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 2nd of May the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

Safety

1. Unnecessary cables will be removed and the cables that are required will be fastened and secured to the walls. The daily risk assessment checklist will be updated. The expected completion date is 31st of Mat 2023.

Infection Control

2. The frayed soft seating in Playroom 1 will be replaced or repaired by the end of June 2023.
3. The children's soothers will be sterilized in the microwave. They will be stored safely in individually labelled containers.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

While the registered provider has stated that the non-compliances have been addressed, evidence to support same has not been submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

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 trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff had current training in first aid for children.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service.
The last recorded fire drill was dated 23rd of April 2023.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 14th of February 2023.
The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 11th of November 2022.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The preschool service was adequately insured for a full day care service for 26 children with an expiry date of 27.03.2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From a visual inspection the premises were sound and stable structure.
- (b) The indoor and outdoor play areas were secure.
- (c) There was natural lighting with windows in each playroom.
The playrooms were well ventilated by means of the openable windows and doors and each room had a Hepa air filtration system.
- (d) Cleaning equipment was safely stored away / inaccessible from the children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (e)
 1. Thirteen children wore a nappy on the day of inspection, it was observed that an insufficient number of nappy changing units were available for these children. There was only one nappy changing unit available when two nappy changing units and 2 designated wash hand basins were required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 2nd of May the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

An additional nappy changing unit and designated sink will be installed as soon as a plumber is available to carry out the works required. The plumber is due to review the works required by the end of May and the expected completion date is August 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance will be addressed when works are completed by August 2023 as stated by the registered provider. This will be reviewed on next inspection.