

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016GY001
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Name of Service:	Play Together Plus
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Address of Service:	172 Rosan Glas, Ragoon, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 V3W5
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Name of Registered Provider:	Iwona Sawicka
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation 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

This private owned preschool service is in the residential estate of Rosan Glas, Ragoon on the west side of Galway city. The service is registered to hold a maximum of 26 children. The programme of care is facilitated Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00 providing full day, part-time and sessional care for preschool children aged 1 to 6 years. The service operates 3 playrooms named ECCE 1 room (this caters for children aged 3- 4 years of age), Toddler room (this caters for children aged 2 to 3 years 6 months) and ECCE 2 (this caters for children aged 3 – 5 years). The service has a designated sleep room, kitchen, utility, staff area and sanitary facilities. There was a designated outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

A total of 8 adults including the registered provider are employed by the service. The registered provider is supernumerary and was not present during the inspection. On the day of inspection 4 adults were working directly with the children; additionally, 1 adult provided kitchen duties and relief in the playrooms and the person in charge provided assistance with the administration part of the inspection and childcare relief. Eight adults 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 9 (d) and Regulation 23 General Safety. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the *person in charge*, deputy 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a manager in charge and a named person able to deputize.
- (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.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff reported being aware of this. Eight staff files in total were reviewed including the registered provider and kitchen/relief persons.
- (2)(a) Twelve of the required 16 written validated references on file were from a past employer.
- (b) Four of the required 16 written validated references on file were from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 8 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to

renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

- (d) Police vetting was available for 7 staff members who lived and worked longer than 6 months in another state while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Documentary evidence indicated that the 5 staff working directly with and caring for the pre-school children in the service, had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-9 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- 9(d) One adult lived and worked for longer than 6 months in 3 states, other than this state, while over the age of 18 years but did not have the required police vetting for 2 of the states. This non-compliance was noted on the previous inspection of 26/4/2023.
 - One adult had the required police vetting from a state they lived and worked for longer than 6 months while over the age of 18 years, but the documentation required translation into English.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 18/7/2025, 21/07/2025, 1/08/2025, 28/08/2025 and 2/10/2025 the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

9 (d)

1. An application has been made for international child protection certificate for the two states the adult worked in for longer than 6 months while over the age of 18 years.
The adult has made a tracking log to follow up on the applications and a reminder system to ensure overseas police vetting is applied for well in advance in the service in the future when required.
2. The police vetting for one adult was translated and a copy maintained on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A copy of the email sent on the 16/06/2025 requesting an international child protection certificate from a state other than this state. A copy of an email from the federal police dated 12/07/2025 and on the 15/08/2025 advising the process had commenced. On the 2/10/2025 the international child protection disclosure certificate was issued.
- A copy of the submission of an application for international child protection certificate in the second state the adult worked while over the age of 18 years dated 20/07/2025 was sent to the office of the early year's inspectorate. The International child protection clearance certificate was submitted on the 28/08/2025.

2. A copy of the translated police vetting for 1 adult was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (d) has been adequately addressed.

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) The pre-school attendance records were reviewed for the previous 3 weeks indicating an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct and maintained on the day of inspection.
There were 5 staff members working directly with and caring for 26 children.
- (8)(a) Following review of the staff roster it was evident that 2 adults or more were on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

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

Compliance Information

Basic Needs (1)(a)

- The service promoted healthy eating in line with the service's health eating policy. The inspector observed that a 3-week menu plan was available in the kitchen area. Meals and snacks were provided by the service and prepared, cooked and stored onsite; these were noted to be served at regular intervals throughout the day.
- The staff members sat with the children during snack and mealtimes and encouraged the younger children to feed themselves. The children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at mealtimes.
- Water was always available in all playrooms and in the outside play areas from individually labelled water bottles.
- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be independent while they had free play, tabletop activities, pretend play, artwork, sensory play and imaginative play.
- Nappy changing with the younger children was carried out regularly and promptly in the Baby and Toddler care rooms.
- Some children from the ECCE 1, ECCE 2 and Toddler room were observed accessing the sanitary area independently. Staff were available to help as required.
- Nappy changing with the younger children from the Toddler room was carried out regularly and promptly in the designated nappy changing area.
- The children played predominately in the outdoor play area throughout the day. They were observed playing on the slide, on the two and four wheeled bikes, playing with sand, playing jumping sack games with the staff and balancing on beams. The children showed the inspector the vegetables they had planted.

Supporting children's relationships:

- During meals and tabletop activities staff in the playrooms were observed sitting with the children, engaging in social conversation, listening to their questions and comments and responding appropriately. The staff and children were observed to use mindful breathing techniques to manage emotions, reduce stress and improve focus.
- While the children played in the outdoor play area the staff were observed to interact with the children, questioning and talking to the children and providing guidance and reassurance when necessary.
- Communication with parents/guardians was observed to be mainly through an electronic childcare application completed by staff in each room. The inspector noted that they contained information regarding sleep, toileting, food and general notes in respect of the children's care in which parents and guardians wrote reciprocal messages to staff. In addition, staff also stated that they communicate with parents and guardians at drop off and collection times and through an individual and group messaging application.
- Each child had their own individual scrapbook with themes, artwork, paintings and observations included. These books are presented to the parents and guardians at the end of each preschool year. Themes included- A sense of touch, Forest animals, Scarecrows, Dinosaurs, Helping hands, All about me, Planets, Senses, I am- to name but a few.
- The children were observed singing songs and preparing for their graduation in the ECCE 1 room. The theme of the week was Safety during the Summer and Father's Day.

Physical and Material Environment

- The playrooms were adequately resourced with a variety of play materials that were accessible to the children on low shelving units, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities.
- The walls of the playrooms were decorated with a variety of materials which helped to promote a sense of identity and belonging for the children in the rooms. Examples included themed artwork, photographs of the children with their families, involved in activities and of the places of importance in the children's local community, emotions and mindfulness.
- The children's artworks were on display. Some were hanging from the ceilings for example butterflies and handprints in the Toddler room.

- There was a cosy area within each of the playrooms with child sized couches, soft wipeable matting and cushions provided which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished.

The outdoor play area

- The area was secure with block walls, fencing and gates. The ground surface was artificial grass with brick paving.
- The area had well defined interest areas which included- a mud kitchen, a planting area with sunflowers, a variety of vegetables (cucumbers, potatoes and lettuce), balance beams, tables and chairs, a slide, two wheeler and four wheeler bikes and trikes.
- The area had an all weather sheltered area with sand boxes enclosed, a kitchen area, tents, bench, playhouse, cars, trucks, buckets and spades.

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:

- There was a secure access system into the main entrance front door of the school and the preschool doors were secure.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised.
- The fire doors in the playroom were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the pre-school.
- The playroom temperature was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition for children.
- The staff's personal belongings were stored securely inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue and after playing outdoors.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Foot pedal lidded bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of rubbish.
- The nappy changing mat was clean and intact. Aprons and gloves were available for use during nappy changing procedures. The staff were observed washing their hands and the children's hands following a nappy change.
- Disposable paper towel was available for single use following handwashing.
- Active cleaning was carried out by the staff throughout the day and records were maintained.

Administration of Medication:

- No medications were administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Quiet rest areas with soft matting and couches were available in each of the 3 playrooms. The Toddler playroom was converted after lunch for sleep provision- the room light was dimmed; stackable beds and floor mats were provided for the children who wanted to sleep.
- There was a designated sleep room with 2 cots available for any children under 2 years of age.
- Safe sleep checks were recorded on the childcare application every 10 mins as per the service Safe Sleep policy. Records were reviewed and accurate information in relation to the colour, breathing pattern, position, colour and room temperature were recorded. The staff members advised they were aware of the requirements of the service policy.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits were free from obstruction throughout the service.
- Fire drills were carried out monthly.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 8 adults. However, 1 vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

It was acknowledged that the registered provider sent an application to renew the 1 garda vetting that had expired to the relevant authority on 21/02/2025 and was awaiting approval.

On the 21/07/2025 the registered provider advised of the following

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider found a garda vetting certificate dated 14/10/2022. A new application process has commenced since 14/07/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the in date garda vetting certificate was submitted on the 21/07/2025 dated 14/10/2022.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 point 1 has been adequately addressed.

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 3 adults trained in first aid responder (FAR) for children were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

- (2)(a) There were 2 first aid boxes with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the playrooms.
- (b) The service demonstrated that a first aid cabinet was wall mounted in the room adjacent to the back door, all contents were in date. The cabinet was fully stocked and a smaller first aid bag was available in the ECCE playroom (for outdoor purposes) 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 fire drill was dated 12/05/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with the last service dated 12/02/2025.
- A record was maintained of the smoke and fire detection system in the premises with the last annual service dated 9/07/2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service on the notice board in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance for a full day care service with a max of 26 preschool children with an expiry date of 27/03/2026.