

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MH011
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Name of Service:	Tigers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Rath Lodge, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A84 W983
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Name of Registered Provider:	Therese Noonan
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	56	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Nexus Building Block, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford and Á Dunne
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Tigers Childcare is a private childcare service which is part of a chain located in a residential area of Ashbourne. The building is a purpose-built single storey facility and consists of 5 care rooms, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities. The service provides full day care, sessional and part-time care to children from 1 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). Hours of operation are from 07:30am to 6:30 pm. The rooms in the service were as follows:

Junior Discoverers (1to 2 years).

Senior Discoverers (1 to 2 years).

Explorers (2 to 3 years).

Active Cubs 1 (3 to 4 years).

Active Cubs 2 (3 to 5 years).

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 13 staff to include the designated person in charge, the deputy person in charge, a chef, and 10 childcare staff. The registered provider and the deputy designated person in charge facilitated the inspection.

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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 9, 11, 19, 21,23 and 29.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 19 and 23 as the inspectors spent time in the Junior and Senior Discoverers rooms, Explorers and Active Cubs 1.

The scope of the inspection Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment and Regulation 11 Staffing levels and Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials were assessed in all care rooms.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

art 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A deputy designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (c) A clear management structure was displayed in the reception area.

(2) The staff files of five employees employed in the service since the last inspection in December 2024, an agency staff member and a quality manager who was present during the inspection were reviewed

(a) Two validated written references were available for four staff members from a past employer.

(b) Two validated written references were available for two staff members and the agency staff member from a source other than a past employer

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the five employees employed in the service since the last inspection in December 2024, an agency staff member and the quality manager. 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 four staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the five employees employed in the service since the last inspection in December 2024, an agency staff member and the quality manager, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained as the table below demonstrates.

Room Name	Age profile	On day of inspection
Junior Discovers	1-2 years	1 adult with 5 children in the morning and in the afternoon.
Senior Discoverers	1-2 years	2 adults and the agency staff member with 10 children in the morning and 2 adults in the afternoon.
Explorers	2-3 years	2 adults with 10 children in the morning and 2 adults and the agency staff member in the afternoon.
Active Cubs 1	3-4 years	2 adults with 14 children in the morning and 2 adults with 13 children in the afternoon.
Active Cubs 2	3-5 years	2 adults with 17 children in the morning and 2 adults with 14 children in the afternoon.

Total	1-6 years	10 adults with 56 children in the morning and 10 adults with 52 children in the afternoon.
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(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed that two adults were on the premises during the operation 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:

- The children were provided with a breakfast of cereal, milk and toast followed by a snack from home at 10am to include fruit, yogurts and sandwiches. A snack of breadsticks, custard and fruit was served at 12 midday and a hot meal of chicken curry and rice or pasta and vegetables from an outside catering company at 2.30pm. An afternoon snack of crackers and fruit was served at 4.30pm. Drinks of water were available in the care rooms throughout the day.
- Practices such as mealtimes, nappy changing and toileting were observed to be regular, timely and pleasant experiences for the children.
- Transitions were observed to be smooth, timely and supportive for children. For example, the mealtime experience was calm and strategies such as calling children by their names and maintaining eye contact were used to facilitate this.

Physical Environment:

- The furniture and equipment in the Junior Discoverers room, Explorers room and Active Cubs rooms 1 and 2 rooms were observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms and was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children.

- An area was available in the care rooms which allowed a child to take a break from activities and rest
- The furniture was positioned to allow children to engage in solitary or group play.
- The outdoor spaces in use on the day of inspection were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment. Equipment available to include climbing frames with slides and steps, ride on bikes and scooters and a sheltered area to enable staff and children to play outdoors in all weathers

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were familiar with the children in their care and their individual preferences and personalities.
- Strategies such as praise and encouragement were observed throughout the inspection.
- Staff engaged with parents in person and via an electronic application. Information including sleep times, food eaten and nappy changes were communicated this way. Parents received pictures of their children undertaking activities such as painting in the Explorers room.
- Staff were observed to resolve any minor difficulties between children in a calm and relaxed manner with children being encouraged to share and take turns.
- Staff worked well together and were aware of their responsibilities in the care of the children. Staff covering breaks were familiar with the children in each classroom and provided additional support during activities and transitions.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Senior Discoverers room areas of interest were poorly developed with little supporting equipment and materials to enhance the themed areas and to ensure meaningful sustained play. For example.

- The play kitchen was empty with materials stored in a basket out of the children's reach.
- Shelves with picture labels for jigsaws were empty.
- Baskets of toys such as magnets and cubes were minimally stocked¹.

2. Play and activities in the Senior Discoverers room was observed to be adult led with equipment and materials stored out of children's reach and not accessible. Children's interests and preferences should be followed with play being child led

3. Outdoor play was not provided to all the children in the service on the morning of inspection despite rain clothing being present for all the children. For example.

- The Junior Discoverers did not go outside from 10.30-11.00am as per the outdoor timetable on display in the service, or to up to 3.30pm when one child left the service and therefore did not experience outdoor play.
- The Senior Discoverers care room did not have an allocated time to go outside in the morning, with only time allocated from 3-4pm daily.
- The Active Cubs 2 children did not go outside due to rain.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. To address the non-compliances the registered provider has stated that the Senior Discoverers room was further developed by adding and expanding the areas of interest with new equipment and revised layouts. At a team meeting the centre manager discussed the importance of developing areas of interest for the children within the rooms to ensure an age appropriate, stimulating environment. Rooms will be reviewed monthly and orders for resources will be placed as required.

2. In response the service has stated that staff in the Senior Discoverers room have read and signed off on the companies interactions policy on 04/07/25. The staff will complete training on the interactions policy by 11/07/25. The staff in the room are aware that all resources and materials within the room are to always be accessible to the children to ensure child led play can take place. A checklist has been developed for room leaders to check daily to ensure all materials are accessible to children and in good repair.

3. To address the non-compliances the Senior Discoverers daily routine has been updated to show an outdoor play time each morning and afternoon. Staff will ensure all children have access to outdoor play each morning and afternoon to allow any children who may go home early to avail of outdoor time.

Staff will ensure that outdoor play is availed of no matter what the weather once children have the appropriate clothing to do so. Garden timetable has been developed and is on display in every room to ensure each room visits the garden at their designated times each day to ensure the children in the service are receiving at least 1 hour of outdoor play daily. Colleagues will communicate any changes to the garden timetable with the educators in other rooms where alterations need to be made to meet the children's needs outside out their scheduled garden time. Staff will complete training on the importance of outdoor play by 11/07/25

This issue was discussed in latest staff meeting the importance of outdoor play for all children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence.
2. Photographic evidence.
3. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) has been adequately addressed.

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 entrance to the service was secured on arrival and throughout the inspection. Entry was managed and monitored by staff.
- Blind cords were observed to be secured.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor space was divided into three separate areas, each fully enclosed and secure.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, single use hand towels and thermostatically controlled warm water were available at all wash hand basins used by the children.
- While children slept 50 centimetres was observed between each child, this reduced the potential risk of cross infection.
- Each child was provided with their own sheet and blanket which were stored in individually named boxes.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff completed 10-minute sleep checks on all sleeping children to include their colour, breathing and position.
- While children slept the temperature of the two cot rooms and care rooms was maintained between the recommended temperature of 18-22°C.

Outing:

- No outings took place in the service during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. At sleep time in the cot room used by the children in the Junior Discoverers room, a cot with a sleeping child was observed blocking the designated fire exit in the room. It is acknowledged that when the inspector alerted the registered provider they immediately attended to the obstruction and repositioned the child and cot. Designated fire exits should be clear of any obstructions during the operation of an early years' service to ensure the safe evacuation of staff and children in the event of an emergency.

Infection Control:

2. Staff in the Senior Discoverers room did not adhere to the service policy and procedures for nappy changing during the inspection. For example.

- A staff member used the same apron for 10 children's nappies changed.
- Staff and children did not wash their hands on completion of nappy changing and on returning to the care room.
- The practice of cleaning the nappy mat after each child was not consistently completed.
- A child was observed retaining their soother for the duration of the process and another child played with a ball that was returned to the care room on completion of the process.

3. Children in the Senior Discoverers room did not have their hands washed before eating snack. This is at variance with the service policy on infection control.

4. In Active Cubs 2 room a low-level countertop was observed to be damaged and worn which reduced the effective cleaning and prevention of cross infection

Safe Sleep:

5. Staff in the Junior Active Cubs room did not document the temperature of the care room while children slept. It is acknowledged that staff recorded a room temperature of 17°C at 7.30am on the morning of the inspection, however, the temperature at sleep time read 22°C at 12.30pm while 9 children settled to sleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. To address the non-compliance the service has stated that the cot has been moved to ensure the fire exit is not blocked at any time, a sign has been placed above the cot to indicate the cot needs to remain in that position.

Infection Control:

2. In response staff have reviewed and signed off on the nappy changing policy and completed nappy changing and toileting policy training that is available on our Tigers Academy training platform to ensure the correct steps are taken during nappy changing. All staff training is to be completed by 11/07/25.

Room leaders/centre manager will train new colleagues through the shadow practice in nappy changing procedure to ensure all new colleagues are confident in the policy and procedure when they start

3. To address staff reviewed and completed infection control policy training to understand the importance of handwashing before eating. Staff training on infection control to be completed by 11/07/25.

Staff will ensure that handwashing is included in transitions and the children's daily routine, an educator guide has been developed for display in the room to ensure handwashing takes place at appropriate times.

Manager/Room Leader will ensure new staff is trained in during shadow practice training.

4. In response the centre manager logged this as an urgent repair on our maintenance system and a new countertop has been ordered to replace the damaged one. Repairs will take place on the countertop on 08/07/25.

The centre manager will ensure that risk assessments are completed daily to check the condition of countertops within the rooms of the service and any issues/repairs that are required will be logged with our maintenance team.

Safe Sleep:

5. To address the non-compliance a revised template for staff to record the room temperature at 9am and 12pm is now on display in the care room. Staff will monitor the temperature of the room during sleep time using the in-room thermometer and any temperatures outside of the safe sleep zone will be reported to management.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

2 and 3. Staff training on infection control policy.

4. Photographic evidence

Safe Sleep:

5. Revised room temperature template.

Summary Comment

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

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for the staff and children present in the service.