

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2018DY194

Name of Service: Charlies Childcare

Address of Service: Unit 6a Newtown Park, Malahide Road, Coolock, Dublin 17

Eircode: D17 EP86

Name of Registered Provider: Ronnie Carroll

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 09/01/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	12

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Floor 7 Brunel building Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin and L. Jameson
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

Description of service

Charlies Childcare is a privately run full day care service which operates from a converted industrial unit in North Dublin. The service offers a sessional, parttime and full day care to children aged between 2 to 6 years old. The service is registered to cater for up to 44 children between the hours of 8am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. The service is also registered to provide school aged childcare but is currently not operating a school aged service. There are three care rooms, two on the ground floor and one on the first floor. There is also an onsite kitchen and office on the first floor. There are sanitary accommodations for children on both floors and there are two outdoor play areas one to the front and one to the side of the property.

Staffing

The owner of the service employs 15 adults to work in the service. Adults employed include the registered provider, chief operations officer, two area managers, the person in charge and 9 staff who work directly with the children and one ancillary staff: the maintenance person. On the morning of the inspection the person in charge and eight staff working directly with the children were present. The chief operations officer and one of the area managers arrived shortly after the inspection began and remained onsite for the duration of the inspection. Neither the service owner or registered provider work in the service and were not present on the day of 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2) and (4)-Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing Levels.

Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child.

Regulation 19 (1)(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Child.

Regulation 25 First Aid.

Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures.

Regulation 28 Insurance.

Regulation 29 Premises.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby/Toddler Room, Toddler Room and Preschool Room. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under: Regulation 15, Regulation 19, Regulation 23 and Regulation 29. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8 Notification of Change in Circumstances. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 internal Tusla referral was made in relation to the service operating outside of its registered status. Further information is available under Regulation 8.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the chief operations officer, the area manager, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

The service did not notify Tusla of a change in their operating hours and were found to be operating outside of their registered hours. The service is registered to open from 8am-5:30pm daily however a discussion with management and a review of paperwork showed that the service is open from 7:30am-5:30pm daily.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Change in Circumstance form was submitted to Tusla on 10th January 2025. Application was approved and we were notified via email on 16 January 2025.

Preventive Action

At the manager's meeting on Friday 24 January, area managers and managers discussed, clarified and confirmed the procedure for future instances, in which, going forward, no changes will be made or implemented until all members of management team of the setting affected, are officially notified of the official approval from Tusla, via Senior Management.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of application approved email.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 8.

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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. A review of the roster showed that a designated person is on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.

- (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of the roster and conversation with the management showed that there are currently 16 adults employed in the service including the service owner and registered provider. The full staff files of seven adults were reviewed including the service owner, registered provider, the chief operations officer, one of the area managers, the maintenance person and two adults who had been employed since the last inspection were reviewed on the day of the inspection.
- (a) Seven written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Seven written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all seven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the four adults who worked directly with the children held 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. On the morning of the inspection there were seven adults working directly with twenty-three children aged between 2 and 4 years of age. During the afternoon there were five adults working directly with twelve children aged between 2 to 4 years of age. In addition, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to provide support to the care rooms when required.

The Chief of Operations and the Area Manager were also present and assisted the inspection team throughout the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:

During the morning:

Baby/Toddler room– Two adults were caring for 5 children aged between 2 to 3 years.

Toddler room - Two adults were caring for 6 children aged between 2 to 3 years.

Preschool room- Three adults were caring for 12 children aged between 3 to 4 years.

During the afternoon:

Baby/Toddler room– Two adults were caring for 2 children aged between 2 to 3 years.

Preschool room and Toddler room joined together for the afternoon- Three adults were caring for 10 children aged between 2 to 4 years.

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-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of ten children's files were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a)-(i) was maintained for each child.

(3) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspection team were available for review.

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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children's personal care needs were promptly attended to. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required. During nappy changes, the staff members were observed to engage with and chat to the children.
- Children's water bottles were on a low-level shelf, accessible to the children throughout the day.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- The staff were observed to use positive and respectful language on the day of inspection, acknowledging the children's achievements with praise and recognition.
- Children were encouraged by staff to explore their environment and given freedom of choice in their daily routine.

- Staff were observed to sit with the children during mealtimes and activities, engaging in meaningful interactions and offering support where required.
- The children in the Baby/Toddler room were observed playing with modelling dough on the day of the inspection, promoting and strengthening fine motor skills.
- Language and literacy were supported in the care room through discussion, songs and stories. For example, a staff member in the preschool room sang songs about the weather and chatted with the children about the cold weather during circle time.
- Staff discussed how they support children with the transition from home to the service by offering a settling-in period and working in collaboration with parents.
- The service used an electronic application to communicate with parents and update them on their child's day including activities, mealtimes and toileting. In addition, the person in charge discussed how staff chat informally with parents at arrival and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, facilitating a comfortable area to eat meals and take part in tabletop activities.
- The care rooms in the service were designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration and equipment and materials were visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. Toys and materials included a selection of jigsaws and pincer grip activities, construction toys, cars and animals and a variety of books were available to the children in the care rooms. The layout of the care rooms encouraged spontaneous, and interactive play. There was art equipment and materials accessible to the children, a construction area with supporting equipment, a home area with a play kitchen with supporting props and dress up costumes for role play.
- There were two outdoor play areas available for the children both with a soft ground surface. The equipment and toys available included connecting equipment, building blocks, sensory materials such as water and sand and various ride on equipment providing gross motor and learning opportunities for children.
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Non-Compliance Information

1. There was a lack of emphasis on the importance of promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness in the Baby/Toddler room and the Toddler room. Materials to reflect the children's important relationships were absent such as pictures or references to family and home life.
2. There was evidence the staff did not follow their own 'Healthy Food' policy. Evidenced by the following.
 - Five children in the preschool room were observed to drink cordial fruit juice in bottles brought into the service from home.
 - Three children aged over 2 years were observed to cordial drink juice from a baby bottle. HSE guidelines recommend replacing all bottles with a cup or beaker for children over one years of age.
 - One child's snack box did not include any nutritious food items and there were two non-nutritious food items which contained a chocolate biscuit, and a waffle observed in the lunch box.

This is at variance with the service's 'Healthy Food' policy which states 'that there will be no juice in the service'. In addition, the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services recommend that sweets, chocolate, biscuits and cakes should not be part of a child's daily diet.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Actions

1. Family walls have been implemented into all rooms, at the child's level.
2. A notice was emailed to parents on January 10, as a reminder to send children with water only and not juice. A reminder of the Healthy Eating Policy with policy issued in paper copy to parents on Tuesday 14 January 2025. Included in the email sent on January 10, Parents were requested to assist staff in encouraging the children to transition from bottles to beakers/cups.

Preventive Actions

1. The theme of identity and belonging was discussed in staff meeting and identity and belonging posters hung up in care rooms for reference. Identify and belonging training arranged for staff.
2. Staff meeting held on January 16 to discuss and clarify all staff's understanding of policy and procedure regarding healthy eating and bottles. Parents issued with emails and paperback policies for future reference. Staff issued with copy of healthy eating policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of family walls. Documentary evidence of identity and belonging training for staff.
2. Documentary evidence of email and notice sent to parents regarding Healthy Eating and baby bottles. Documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and healthy eating policy.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19.

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 door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The entrance door was appropriately monitored by staff who asked the inspection team to sign in the visitor book on arrival.
- Door handles in the care room were placed up high on the doors. This prevented children from exiting the care rooms unsupervised.
- Radiators were placed high up on the walls and were inaccessible to children. This prevented a child from being injured from the heat source.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Effective handwashing practices were observed on the day of inspection. The children were supported to wash their hands before eating, following nappy changing and using the toilet.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Windows in the care rooms were observed to be open which allowed for circulation of air and reduced the risk of cross infection.
- Lunches and perishable items were refrigerated.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- A cleaning agent was observed to be accessible to children in the sanitary accommodation in the Baby/Toddler room. It is acknowledged that the children in this room were supervised at all times and the person in charge took immediate action to address the non-compliance by removing the cleaning agent when the inspector brought the identified risk to their attention.

Infection Control:

- During the morning, one of the inspectors observed a child in the Baby/Toddler room to become unwell, this child vomited at approximately 11:40am. Although the staff member alerted the parents of the child that their child had become unwell, the child remained in the service until the afternoon when the child was picked up at approximately 3:00pm. This is at variance to the service policy which states that in the case of vomiting, a child must be removed from the service immediately and cannot return until 48 hours after their last vomiting incident.
- One large foam cube and three foldable foam mats and were observed to be torn with exposed foam in the Baby/Toddler room leaving an ineffective surface for cleaning. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

The service did not ensure correct storage and administration of medication as evidenced by the following:

- A clearly written medical care plan to enable staff to identify and accurately administer treatment when required was not available for two children present with prescribed emergency medication. The absence of an individual medical care plan for the two children posed a risk of staff not being aware of symptoms to look out for and the correct procedures to follow in the event where one of these children required the medication to be administered.
- Two prescribed medications were observed not labelled or in their original packaging and were stored in an area that was accessible to children. Medicine needs to be stored safely out of reach of the children in its original packaging, clearly labelled providing details of child's name and details of the dosage to be administered.

6. A sample of ten administration of medication records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The following information was not included:
- On three out of ten records reviewed there was no signature of the staff member who had witnessed the administration of medication.
 - On two out of the ten records reviewed there was no parent signature recorded to show that the parent had been informed on the day of the administration of medication. Failure to provide parents with this information on collection could result in a child receiving an overdose.

Fire Safety:

7. Children's attendance records were not completed in a timely manner. Two children arrived at the Baby/Toddler room between 10:00am and 10:15am. These children were not signed in on the attendance records upon their arrival. This reduced the effective evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged that staff took immediate action and updated the attendance records when the inspector brought this to their attention.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective Action and Preventative Action

1. Importance of careful storage of cleaning agents addressed at staff meeting. Health and safety procedures highlighted and added into the daily risk assessment sheet. Now included in Risk Assessment form is 'no dangerous substance within reach of children'.

Infection Control:

Corrective and Preventative Action

2. Staff meeting included addressing the Infection Control Policy, copies given to all staff. A copy of the infection control policy issued to parents on 5 February 2025 and reminders they may need to facilitate collecting children in the event of illness occurring.
3. Mats and soft are furniture checked and removed from area. New equipment purchased and placed in area. Daily risk assessment updated to include 'cosy corner materials in good order, no tears or rips' checklist daily and discussed at staff meeting.

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Action and Preventative Action

4. Medical Care plans created for children. Medical care plans and procedures for these highlighted at staff meeting.

5. Medications removed from the area. New shelf inserted at a high level. Clear labelling providing child's details and dosage details implemented. All staff issued with a copy of medicine administration policy at staff meeting. Risk assessment updated to state 'medication stored correctly', for daily checks.
6. Medicine administration forms were all checked and updated, and new forms filled in as needed, signed by all staff, management and parents. Procedure put into place, management will be responsible for signing off on all medication administration records daily.

Fire Safety:

Corrective Action and Preventative Action

7. Children were signed in immediately and the importance of fire safety and record keeping discussed at staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of safe storage out of reach of children and documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and risk assessment.

Infection Control:

2. Documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and email sent to parents.
3. Photographic evidence of new equipment. Documentary evidence of receipts of purchase, risk assessment and staff meeting agenda.

Administration of Medication:

4. Documentary evidence of medical care template and staff meeting agenda.
5. Photographic evidence of medication storage and labelling. Documentary evidence of staff meeting agenda and risk assessment.
6. Photographic evidence of completed medication administration forms.

Fire Safety:

7. Documentary evidence of staff agenda and fire safety training focussing on importance of record keeping booked for all staff.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance identified under 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) There were two staff members trained in First Aid Responder (FAR). A review of the staff roster showed that the registered provider ensured that there was always at least one adult present in the service with a FAR certification.

(2) (a)(b) A first aid box was available within each care room and stored in an accessible position with visual displays to indicate its location.

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

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) The service conducts monthly fire drills with the pre-school children on various days and at various times. The last fire drill was held on 10 December 2024.

(b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment in September 2024 and the smoke alarms on 10 June 2024.

- (2) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspection team were available for review.
- (4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed on the wall in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate with an expiry date of 27 March 2025 was located on the wall of the office.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the premise was:

- (c) An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care rooms.
- The temperature of the baby/toddler room was recorded at 20.7°C at 10.04am.
 - The temperature in the toddler room was recorded at 20.8°C at 10.15am.
 - The temperature in the preschool room was recorded at 21°C at 10.20am.
- (d) The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There was a cleaning schedule displayed on the wall of the care rooms and the two outdoor areas.