

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2019DY008

Name of Service: Footprints Early Years

Address of Service: St. Catherine's Sports Centre, Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8

Eircode: D08 W5WC

Name of Registered Provider: Racheal Govan

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 19/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson & L A Webster
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

Footprints Early Years is a privately run service located in a sports complex in Dublin 8. The service currently operates from 9:00am to 1:30pm, Monday to Friday and is registered to provide part time and sessional care to children aged 2 – 6 years of age. The service comprises of one care room with sanitary accommodation and nappy changing facilities available. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme through a session from 9:00am to 12:00pm. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises. The service provides school age care in the afternoon.

Staffing

The registered provider employs seven adults to work in the service, including the person in charge, an area support manager and five early years practitioners to work directly with the children, one of whom works as a relief staff member. On the day of the inspection, the person in charge and three early years practitioners were present when the inspectors arrived unannounced in the service. The area support manager arrived shortly after to assist with the inspection process and the registered provider arrived in the service in the afternoon.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15(1) Record of a Pre-School Child and Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service.

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, person in charge, area support manager, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 inspectors arrived unannounced in the service and at all times during the operational hours of the service on the day of inspection.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure, and staff members were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

- (2) The registered provider currently employs seven adults, including the designated person in charge, an area support manager and five early year practitioners to work directly with the children attending the service. The full staff record of six adults, and the Garda vetting disclosure of one adult were reviewed.
- (a) Eleven written and verified references were available for two adults from past employers.
 - (b) One written and verified reference was available for one adult from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the seven adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
 - (d) Documentary evidence showed that four adults had lived in a state other than Ireland for more than six consecutive months as an adult. International police vetting from the relevant countries was available for all four staff members.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to six adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the six 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.*
- (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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Three staff members were caring for fifteen children when the inspectors arrived in the service.
- (2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service for the duration of the inspection. The person in charge and the area support manager was available in a supernumerary position to provide cover in the care room as needed.
- (8)
 - (a) The registered provider ensured that two adults were present in the service at all times verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service

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 sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All of the 10 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.
- (3)
- (c) The children's records were available and open for review by the inspectors as authorised persons.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child were stored in the children's attendance record in the care room.
 - (i) The registered provider ensured that there was an accurate record of the staff roster containing the details of the staff members rostered on the day of inspection.
- (3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspection team were available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

- (k) Five accident and incident records were available for review by the inspectors. Of the five records, the following information was not included:
- Three records did not include the child's surname.
 - One record did not include the date that a parent signed the form.
 - One record did not include the date of the accident.

Records must be completed in full. Any miscommunication around incidents involving children can potentially hamper appropriate care following an injury.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

- (k) Incomplete forms have been updated so as to ensure all necessary details and information is documented. All staff members have received re-training on completing accident / incident forms, Management also discussed the importance of ensuring all information is included on the forms. Management will carry out checks to ensure the correct practice is used at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)

- (k) Staff training card.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 16.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:
- Staff members were observed to use positive and respectful language on the day of inspection. Any minor disagreements that occurred between the children were dealt with in a positive and calm way and the children were supported to resolve any conflict that arose.
 - Staff members were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day. The children appeared to be happy and confident in their environment.
 - Staff members were prompt to attend to the children's needs, offering support and comfort where required.
 - Staff members reported that mealtimes were scheduled and social, with children sitting alongside each other and staff members offering support and encouragement where required. A snack tray was also accessible to the children during the morning, which consisted of raisins, blueberries and rice cakes. Water was readily available to the children in the care room.
 - Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required. The children who were toilet-trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff members.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- Low level tables and chairs were available for use by the children which allowed them to engage in tabletop activities and meals comfortably.
- The care room was designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service. Equipment and materials were accessible to the children and stored at a low level to encourage independence and decision-making skills.
- Play materials including magnets, puzzles and jigsaws, books, mark making and art and crafts, dolls and tea sets were available to the children to facilitate a range of play experiences.
- Toys and materials were grouped into defined interest areas with props and supporting equipment.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Some materials in the care room were limited in their amounts which were not adequate to support the children in spontaneous or imaginative play.
2. Although a cosy area was included in the room design, the area was not inviting for the children. Blankets and pillows were folded up and stored in a shelving unit alongside a selection of books that were stacked on top of one another, potentially restricting the children's wish to engage in rest or quiet activities.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Management will ensure that there is an adequate number of materials and equipment so the children can be successful in spontaneous or imaginative play. Staff have been updated on the importance of checking the toy quantity and reporting the need for additional toys or equipment when required. Weekly checks of toys will also be carried out.
2. The cosy area has been rearranged; blankets and pillows are now set up to make the area more inviting and with easier access to books. All staff members have been updated on ensuring areas in the care room are accessible and inviting to the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographs of toy boxes and copy of staff training card.
2. Photographs of the cosy area and available resources. Staff training card.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 21.

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.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary area was equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use in the service to hygienically dispose of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was observed to be in date, stored in the correct packaging and out of the children's reach. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection and it was reported by management that children do not routinely receive medication on site.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.
- The emergency evacuation route was displayed in the service. Staff members were knowledgeable of the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Radiator temperatures in the care room and sanitary accommodation were observed to be above the recommended temperature; the following was observed:

Radiator in sanitary accommodation	50.6
Radiator 1 in care room	49°C
Radiator 2 in care room	43.9

It is acknowledged that the person in charge turned the radiators off immediately and children's access to radiators was restricted when the inspectors brought this to their attention.

- A mat located inside the door to the outdoor play area was observed to be damaged and moved easily under foot, posing a potential trip hazard.
- The bin in the sanitary area was damaged, posing a potential safety risk.

Infection Control:

- The following was observed in the care room and sanitary area that did not support effective cleaning practices and posed a potential risk of cross contamination:
 - The floor in the care room had a visible build-up of dirt around skirting boards and in other areas throughout the care room.
 - The low-level chairs used by the children were dirty, with a visible build-up of grime.
 - The storage boxes which contained toys had a visible build-up of dust and dirt.
 - Costumes in the dress up area were visibly dirty.
 - Blankets and a floor mat which were part of the cosy area were observed to be dirty.
 - The nappy changing mat in the sanitary accommodation had a build-up of dirt in the creases of the plastic covering. The cleaning sheets were up to date when reviewed by the inspectors on the day of inspection and had been completed ahead of time for the following day, 20 November 2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The radiator temperatures have been adjusted, and a control has been put in place to ensure they do not exceed the maximum recommended temperature. Temperature checks are taken daily, and staff members have been updated on the importance of ensuring that the checks are carried out and appropriate heating controls are in place.

2. The damaged mat has been removed and replaced with a new mat. Staff members will monitor the wear and tear of the mat and management will replace it when required.
3. The damaged bin has been removed and replaced. Management will replace as required.

Infection Control:

4. The care room and equipment have been deep cleaned to remove all build-up of dirt, and the cleaning checklist has been updated to ensure thorough cleaning practices continue. Staff members were updated on the importance of cleaning standards to maintain mandatory health and hygiene practices. Management will carry out spot checks to ensure all cleaning standards are being maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Radiator temperature checklist and photograph of temperature.
2. Photograph of new mat.
3. Photograph of new bin.

Infection Control:

4. Updated cleaning checklists for the care room and sanitary area. Staff training card.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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 had an expiry date of 27 March 2026.