

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020FL001			
Name of Service:	Charlies Childcare			
Address of Service:	3 Feltrim Industrial Park, Drynam Road, Swords, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	K67 R7P9			
Name of Registered Provider:	Ronnie Carroll			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date of Inspection:	30/04/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	57
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15.			
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly & AM Coyle			
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

Charlie's Childcare is situated in a 2 storey commercial premises located in an industrial park on the outskirts of Swords in north Co Dublin. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day care to children from 0 to 6 years of age. The service caters for a maximum of 82 pre-school children, operating from 7.00am to 6.30pm each weekday. Eligible children are facilitated to participate in the state-funded Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00 midday daily. There are 6 care rooms in operation in the service with Baby room 1, Baby room 2 and the Toddler room located on the ground floor and the pre-pre-school room, the Pre-school room 1 and the Pre-school room 2 situated on the first floor of the service. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the service.

Staffing

A service manager is employed who oversees the operational management of this service, working with a team of 16 staff members who work directly with the children and 2 staff members are employed for catering and household duties. The service manager was present on the day of the inspection, as well as the group general manager. There are two area managers, one of whom was present on the day. In addition, there were 2 staff members providing cover on the day of the inspection. The registered provider was not present in the service during the inspection. In total there were 22 staff members present on the day of the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby Room 1, Baby Room 2, Toddler Room, Pre-Pre-school Room, Pre-school Room 1 and Pre-school Room 2.

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 person in charge, management team, 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.

(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 manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09:15am.

(2) The files for 24 adults including the person in charge were reviewed, and the following was recorded:

- (a) Forty-Two validated and written references were available from past employers.
- (b) Six validated and written references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 24 adults whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 14 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 22 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) International Police vetting was not available for 1 adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d)

Corrective Action:

The manager reported that the staff in question was in the process of completing international vetting at the time of the inspection. The service received the completed vetting for this staff member.

Preventive Action:

The manager discussed that at the interview stage, staff will be asked if they have ever worked abroad over 6 months. The service will ensure that they receive the relevant paperwork prior to start date being issued.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (d)

Evidence of international police vetting for 1 staff member.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 9 has been 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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In Baby Room 1 there were 6 children aged 1 year 4 months to 1 year 9 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Baby Room 2 there were 4 children aged 1 year to 1 year 3 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Toddler Room there were 10 children aged 1 year 8 months to 2 years five months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Pre-preschool Room there were 13 children aged 2 years 5 months to 3 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Pre-school Room 1 there were 18 children aged 3 years 4 months to 4 years 4 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Pre-school Room 2 there were 14 children aged 3 years 8 months to 5 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster and sign in records.

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:

- Children's meals are sourced from an external company and are reheated and served by the chef. On the day of the inspection the children had 'Chicken a la king'; chicken with mashed potato and cabbage for their first hot meal and beef lasagne for their second hot meal in the afternoon. Children bring their own morning and afternoon snacks from home to the service. There were alternative food options available for children with additional dietary requirements or preferences.
- Children's water bottles were accessible to the children indoors and water bottles were brought to the outdoor area during outdoor play times.
- The children's personal care needs were attended to promptly. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently.
- The children in Baby room 1 and Baby room 2, slept in cots in the sleep room at their scheduled sleep time after they had their dinner. The children aged over 2 years in the service who required sleep slept on stackable beds and cocoon beds set up in the Toddler room and in the Pre-preschool room after the children had their first hot meal in the service.
- Cosy areas were equipped with a mat, chairs, cushions and a selection of books for reading and relaxation.
- All the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. Children were comforted when upset and children received praise from staff.
- Staff soothed children whilst going to sleep with relaxing music playing to provide a calm atmosphere.

- Transitions were well supported in the service. Throughout the care rooms verbal strategies were used by the practitioners to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.
- Staff communicate with parents through use of a digital software application to share information about children's care needs.

Physical and material environment:

- There was comfortable furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit when carrying out tabletop activities or for mealtimes.
- The care rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. In Baby room 1, there was a construction area with plastic and wooden blocks, road mat with transportation toys, kitchen area and supporting materials, dolls and dress up, jigsaws, rocking horse and ride on cars to provide opportunities for physical play. A ball pool with a slide within it was available in the Baby room 2 for the children to use in addition to a well-resourced kitchen area, push along toys, musical instruments and a range of appropriate table top materials. In the Toddler Room, Preschool room, Pre-preschool room and Pre-school Room 2 the areas of interest included home areas with supportive equipment available to the children including kitchen, role play area, puppet theatre, dress up resources and dolls all of which supported the children's imaginary play experiences. There were construction areas with plastic building bricks along with a variety of small world figures, wild animals and dinosaurs to support children's imaginative and dramatic play. Tabletop materials such as construction straws, pegs and jigsaws provided opportunities for early numeracy learning. In addition, there were arts and craft materials including paint, pencils, chalk, paper and scissors to support mark making opportunities and creativity for children. There was a selection of books in the cosy corner and reading areas which supported children's language development.
- In addition, there was a sensory room with a variety of sensorial resources where children could spend time during the day in smaller groups.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area divided into two areas is located to the rear of the service. In the outdoor play area for the Baby Room, there was a playhouse, sand pit, transportation toys, large plastic blocks and a ride on bike. In the large outdoor area, there was a large wooden boat with climbing wall, large house with slide, sand pit with buckets, kitchen area with real life items, transportation toys, ride in and ride on cars which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills.

Programme of Activities:

- Children's learning and development is documented through observations of the children. Staff carry out

short term and medium-term curriculum planning.

- Identity and belonging were promoted throughout the service. For example, children's names were called when throwing a ball to each other in the outdoor area. Photographs of children families were displayed on family wall displays in the care rooms in the service and in a Family book in the reading area of the Toddler room. In addition, displays included birthday chart display and the children's artwork. Children's photographs were on the children's coat hooks.
- Children's independence was supported. For example, there were steps up to the nappy changing mat in the changing area of the toddler room to support children's independence.
- Children were observed at sensory play with sensory materials to include lentils, pasta and playdough during indoor play and with sand in the outdoor area.
- Staff played parachute games in the outdoor area with the children and set up physical games with plastic cones, hoops and small bean bags which promoted children's fundamental movement skills.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic needs:

1. The sleep needs of one of the children attending Baby room 2 were not met in a timely manner. The child was observed showing signs of tiredness including irritability, crying and eye rubbing at 10:05 am and was eventually placed to sleep at 10:35am. Children must be facilitated to sleep when they exhibit signs of tiredness.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Basic needs:

Corrective Action:

1. Staff within the baby room have undergone refresher childcare training within the company from a member of the services' training team, focusing on the areas of sleep and how to recognise signs of tiredness.

Preventive Action:

1. The person in charge will be assigned to cover sleep room and care rooms and will assist staff with doing naps times where needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Basic needs:

- Safe sleep policy.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been 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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspectors observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with artificial grass.
- Children wore sunhats for sun protection when playing outdoors.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Pedal operated bins were available for waste and disposal of contaminated items.
- Windows were open for air circulation in care rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep plan documentation was available to demonstrate that a full sleep plan review had been completed by staff for three children under the age of two and that parents had been fully included in this decision.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- There were fire drill procedures displayed in the hallway of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Infection control measures were not always followed. The possible risk of the spread of infection was increased due to the following:

- On discussion with staff members in the Baby room 2 room it was reported that soothers are placed directly into sterilising solution and are not washed in advance. This is at variance with the service policy which states that soothers must be washed in warm soapy water before being sterilised.
 - Handwashing was not always carried out by staff when blowing children's noses.
2. The water at the wash hand basin in the sanitary area on the corridor upstairs adjacent to the Pre-school room 2 was cold. Cold water does not support effective hand hygiene.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Corrective Actions:

1.
 - At the services' staff meeting the mouthing and sterilisation policies were discussed. Staff were reminded of how to correctly sterilise soothers and the importance of washing the soothers in warm soapy water before sterilising.
 - The Hand washing policy was addressed at the staff meeting. Staff were reminded of the importance of infection control and the importance of washing hands after blowing children's noses.

2.
The plumber was called out to adjust the water temperatures in the upstairs corridor sanitary area.

Preventive Actions:

1.
 - There is a step-by-step guidance sheet displayed in the downstairs kitchen where sterilisation takes place to further remind staff. At induction stage new staff are given a copy of this and are shown by management how to correctly sterilise soothers and mouthing toys prior to working in the classroom.
 - Ensuring hand sanitiser is easily accessible to all staff in garden area where there is no hand washing facilities.

2.
Monthly audits will be carried out to ensure all water temperatures in all sanitary areas are at the correct level.

This will be also added to the managers morning checklist to check all water taps.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff meeting agenda.
- Policy-mouthing and sterilisation.

- Hand washing policy.
- Step by step guidance sheet.
- Photo of hand sanitiser in classroom garden bag.
- Invoice.
- Monthly audit
- Managers morning check list.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been 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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. There were 3 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR), 2 of which were present on the day of the inspection. In addition, there were 6 staff trained in paediatric first aid who were all present on the day of the inspection.

(2)(a) Adequately stocked first aid kits were observed in the service.

(b) First aid boxes were stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

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 fire fighting 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 record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last fire drill dated as having been carried out on the 22 April 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced in September 2024 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 10 June 2024.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the reception area and throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 82 children for a full day care service with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.

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.*

Non-Compliance Information

(c) There was a strong odour in the nappy changing area used by the children attending the care rooms on the first floor of the service indicating that the ventilation system in place in the nappy changing room was inadequate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Actions:

(c)

- The services' staff deep cleaned the vent and hoovered out all dust.
- Air fresheners have been placed in all sanitary areas.
- There is also a nappy changing bin schedule mid-day to eliminate odours.

Preventive Actions:

- Management will check that nappy changing bin schedule is being followed, and all bins are changed mid-day.
- Hoovering vents has been added to weekly cleaning sheets to be completed by cleaning staff.
- Air freshener refill will be ordered monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of vent.
- Receipt of air fresheners.
- Nappy changing schedule.
- Cleaning Sheet.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 29 have been addressed.