

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020KE005
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Play and Learn Childcare and Education
-------------------------	--

Address of Service:	The Paddocks, Morristown and Cornerscourt, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	W12WF34
-----------------	---------

Name of Registered Provider:	Allison Farrell
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	04/02/2025
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	42
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
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	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

Play and Learn Childcare and Education is one of four early years services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full-day, part-time and sessional care and education for children aged 1-6 years, Monday to Friday from 7am to 6.30pm. The service is located in a purpose-built, single-story premises in a residential area on the outskirts of Newbridge. Children are allocated to one of four rooms according to their age and stage of development. There is a designated sleep room for children attending the Wobbler room. Outdoor areas are located at the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

There are 18 staff members employed to work in the service including two managers, a chef and a cleaner. Fourteen staff are employed to work directly with the children with the managers available to provide relief cover or help as needed. Thirteen staff members, the area manager and a student were present on the day of the inspection. Eleven staff members and the student were working directly with the children.

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 and health, welfare and development of child and notifications and complaints. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(b). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler and Toddler 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 person in charge, area 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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.

(b) The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a person who could deputise to be present at all times of opening.

(c) The service had a clearly documented management structure with staff roles outlined. Adults demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the lines of authority within the service.

(2)
(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references for all adults. References had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. All references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced for all adults who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(3) Garda vetting disclosures and reference verifications were dated prior to adults commencing work in the service.

(4) All staff employed to work directly with children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. There were 11 adults and a student working directly with 54 children. The person in charge was available to assist if needed.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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) Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. The adults demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children, listening to them, responding to their cues and speaking kindly to them. Children were comforted when they became upset. A key person approach was used to support children in forming secure attachments. Minor conflicts were managed promptly and calmly by staff, using age-appropriate techniques. Transitions between activities and care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next and maintaining a calm atmosphere.

Snacks and meals were offered to the children at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in small groups with adults when eating. Mealtimes were relaxed, social experiences. The adults sat with the children engaged them in conversation and promoted social skills. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were offered to children regularly.

The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. They helped them to wash their hands and clean their faces and noses as needed. Each child had a change of clothes available for use if necessary. Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between when required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions.

Soft seating and mats were available within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep before dinner. The children slept in cots or beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff told the inspectors that the children are facilitated to sleep outside of routine times if they show signs of tiredness. The children were made comfortable for sleep with their outer clothing and shoes removed and soothers given to those who used them. Staff checked on the sleeping children at ten-minute intervals and remained in the rooms where children slept on low beds.

An app was used for two-way communication with parents/guardians to support the continuation of children's care. This allowed staff to share information in real time about the child's day including sleep, nappy changing and diet. The inspectors also observed adults providing parents/guardians with information regarding their child's day when they were being collected.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.
- (5) The requirement in paragraph (4) is without prejudice to any requirement to retain the record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) under any other enactment or rule of law.

Compliance Information

(1) The service had a complaints policy which complied with the regulatory requirements. The policy was available on the service's app system for staff, parents or guardians to access.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

(2), (3), (4) & (5) The person in charge and area manager reported that the service had not received any complaints. Both managers were aware of the requirements for recording complaints and the retention requirements for records.