

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DS003
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Name of Service:	Play and Learn Childcare & Education
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Address of Service:	Ground Floor, Block B3, The Quarter, Citywest Avenue, Citywest, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Allison Farrell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	09/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	55
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien & H. Bourke
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).

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Description of service

Play and Learn Childcare and Education is registered to provide full day care to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service is one of four services operated by the registered provider. The service operates from four rooms in a purpose-built crèche facility on the ground floor of an apartment complex in Citywest, Dublin 24. A separate sleep room and sanitary accommodation is provided together with an outdoor area which is located at the rear of the building. The service opens from 07:30 to 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are twenty-three staff members currently employed to work in the service, which includes the person in charge, deputy person in charge and a chef. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. On the morning of inspection, there were 12 staff working directly with the children. The operations manager arrived at the service following the inspectors' arrival.

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, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment,

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Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8) - Staffing levels,
Regulation 16(1) – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service,
Regulation 19(1) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play,
Regulation 22 – Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(1)– Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service across each of the four care rooms.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

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

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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*

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

(b) The deputy manager was present and in charge of the service throughout the inspection.

(2)

Upon review of the staff roster and staff files, it was identified that there were eight new staff members employed to work in the service since the last inspection on 15 July 2025. All staff files were reviewed in relation to regulation 9(2)(c).

Documentation was reviewed in respect of eight adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

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- (a) Of the 16 validated, written references that were required, 13 were available from a past employer.
- (b) Of the 16 validated, written references that were required, 3 were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for 24 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was required and available for seven staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available demonstrating that all eight adults employed since the last inspection held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications

Non-Compliance Information

(3)

All procedures outlined in paragraph (2) were not completed prior to staff being appointed. One reference for one adult employed on 06 October 2025 was validated on 21 November 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Management reviewed the document procedures and staff file requirements following the inspection findings. The service ensured that all relevant policies and procedures relating to recruitment, references and staff documentation were reinforced with management to support compliance.

Management will ensure that all recruitment policies and procedures are fully implemented moving forward. A checklist outlining all required documentation has now been added to staff files to support management in ensuring that all references and required documents are obtained, validated and in place prior to any staff member commencing employment within the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of the updated checklist to be used to ensure that all staff files are complete.

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Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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 directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the day of inspection there were 55 children attending the service being supervised by 12 adults on the morning of inspection and 55 children being supervised by 10 adults in the afternoon.

8(a)

There was a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection. This was confirmed on review of the staff roster

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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;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Children's attendance was recorded on an online application on the day of inspection. These records included details of each child's arrival and departure times from the service.
- (i) A record of the staff roster was available and was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) A sample of 16 administration of medication records were reviewed on an online application and all were completed as required by the regulation.
- (k) A sample of 12 accident and incident records were reviewed on an online application and all were completed as required by the regulation.

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)
- Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly on the day of inspection. Staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals. The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. Staff reminded and assisted children with hand washing and cleaned their noses as needed. Children wearing

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nappies had these changed at scheduled times or as needed in between these times. The older children used the toilet independently. Children observed in play in the outdoor area wore coats appropriate to the weather.

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals are provided by the service for children attending on a full-day care basis. Meals were provided at regular intervals throughout the inspection. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a dinner of meatballs and spaghetti. Staff advised that alternatives were available, and food preferences were catered for on the day of inspection. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within the care rooms. Water was available for drinking in the care rooms.

Children were supported in transitions between activities within the care rooms and in transitions to other care rooms. Children were familiar with these transitions and engaged in these smoothly. The environment appeared calm and there was very positive engagement between the children and adults.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly, offering comfort and support when needed. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff encouraged and praised the children when promoting positive behaviour and provided appropriate distraction techniques where necessary. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's choice and independence during play and mealtimes.

Information in relation to each child's day such as arrival and departure times, food, nappy changes, activities, accident and incidents and room transitions are communicated with parents through an online application as relevant to each child attending the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The indoor environment consisted of four care rooms with their own sanitary accommodation, one cot room, an office, staff sanitary accommodation, staff room and a kitchen. The care rooms were bright and warm with adequate space for the children. They were adequately laid out with interest areas accessible to the children. Children had access from each room to an outdoor play area located to the rear of the service which was suitable to the ages of the children. This space consisted of an all-weather surface and was well resourced with a variety of toys for the children to use such as, a sandpit, climbing frames and slides.

The staff advised the inspectors that they facilitate daily outdoor play. The outdoor area and the equipment and materials available provide appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. On the day of inspection, children were playing outdoors and were adequately dressed in warm jackets, hats and gloves.

(b) The service had a designated sleep room with cots suitable for babies and young children under two years in addition to sleep beds suitable for older children. In the rooms where children required sleep, all bedding and sleep bags were stored in individual labelled storage bags and changed as required for shared cots. On the day of inspection, lights were turned down, blinds pulled down and calming music played at an appropriate volume, Bedding was changed as appropriate and laundered weekly. All care rooms had a cosy/rest area within the room to provide space for rest and relaxation for children who may require time out from the normal activity within the room.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy and healthy eating was observed to be encouraged within the service. The service supplied the children's snacks and a hot, nutritious meal, in line with the three-week menu plan. The hot meal provided was prepared by the chef onsite. On the day of inspection, the hot meal consisted of meatballs and spaghetti. The children were offered alternatives based on their dietary requirements and additional food was available if requested by the children. The children had access to their own water bottles throughout the inspection.

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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 toys and play equipment observed in use by the children in the indoor and outdoor areas on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The person in charge had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication, which is only administered in an emergency, was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing in adjoining sanitary accommodation for all care rooms. Good hand-washing practices were observed after toileting, before eating and before and after nappy changing for staff and children..
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers and mouthed toys.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children.
- Cleaning schedules were available in all care rooms and the service appeared clean.

Administration of Medication:

- An adequate administration of medication record was available to document medication given should this be required in an emergency. All staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the services administration of medication policy and procedure.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs of the children in the age group 1 to 2 years of age were child led but there was also a designated time for sleep after dinner. The children slept on appropriate floor beds in their care room in the Wobbler Room and Toddler Room. There was also one designated cot room adjacent to the Toddler Room. The service had an adequate number of cots to accommodate the age profile of the children who required cots for safe sleep. All children were offered the opportunity to sleep after their dinner. All shoes and heavy clothing were removed before children who required sleep were placed in their cots with

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cellular blankets. Sleeping children's breathing, position and colour was recorded in addition to the temperature of the designated cot room on an online application every 10 minutes.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure available for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. On the day of inspection, tables in the Wobbler Room were not cleaned before dinner was served. Only one table in the Senior Preschool room was cleaned. Not effectively cleaning the tables prior to serving meals to children, poses a risk of cross contamination and infection.
3. On the day of inspection, the adults and children in the Junior Preschool room were observed to lift the lid of a pedal bin by the lid to dispose of waste. This practice was also observed being carried out by the adults in the Wobbler Room. This practice poses a risk of infection to adults and children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The Garda Vetting renewal was applied for immediately once management became aware of the oversight during the inspection visit. The updated Garda Vetting disclosure was received within the following weeks and has now been added to the staff file. A copy of the renewed Garda Vetting disclosure is attached as supporting evidence.

A Garda Vetting tracking system has now been implemented to support management in monitoring renewal dates for all staff members. Moving forward, management will regularly review staff files to ensure Garda Vetting is renewed every three years as required.

Infection Control:

2. All staff were re-trained on the importance of cleaning and disinfecting tables before serving meals to children to reduce the risk of cross contamination and infection.
3. All staff were re-trained on the importance of using pedal bins correctly and avoiding lifting the lid by hand to reduce the risk of infection within the service.

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Management also reviewed the Health and Safety procedures with the team to ensure safe practices are followed at all times.

Moving forward, all new staff members will receive training during induction on the importance of cleaning tables before and after meals and use of pedal bin to ensure safe hygiene practices are maintained within the service. Management will also do regular spot checks to ensure that these practices are being maintained continuously throughout the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of Garda Vetting renewals for staff.

Infection Control:

Induction training checklist which includes training on infection prevention and control.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.