

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DS003		
Name of Service:	Play and Learn Childcare & Education		
Address of Service:	Ground Floor, Block B3, The Quarter, Citywest Avenue, Citywest, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D24 H7XP		
Name of Registered Provider:	Allison Farrell		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	15/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM 47
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).			
Conditions if applicable	N/A		

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 7:30am to 6:30pm 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, a chef and relief chef. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. On the morning of inspection, there were 15 staff working directly with the children. The area 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 area 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)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8) - Staffing levels

Regulation 15(1) – Record in relation to a pre-school child.

Regulation 16 (1)(a)(h)(i)(j)(k) - Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of a pre-school child and regulation 16(1) - 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 person in charge, 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.

(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 service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived at 10:50 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 24 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for seven staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(2)
The inspection focused on the recruitment records for seven adults employed since the last inspection on 8th October 2024. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of all staff. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

(a)(b) Fourteen written and validated references were available for seven adults, thirteen from a past employer and one from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 24 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for four 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 adults employed to work directly with the children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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. There were forty-seven children attending the service being supervised by fifteen adults on the day of inspection.

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.

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..*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

Twelve children's records were sampled and reviewed. The records detailed the information as required by the regulation.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (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)
- (a) Curriculum Vitaes were available on file and reviewed for all staff employed in the service since the last inspection on 8th October 2024.
 - (h) Children's attendance was recorded on an electronic device 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) Eleven medication records were reviewed and found to be completed appropriately with signatures from both staff and parents.

(k) A sample of ten accident and incident records were reviewed and found to be completed appropriately with signatures from both staff and parents.

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

(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)(a)(b)

Basic Needs

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. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating shepherd's pie for dinner, and a selection of fruit and yogurt for snack. Staff advised that alternatives were available, and food preferences were catered for on the day of inspection. Additional helpings were available on request by children. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their dinner. Younger children were provided with bibs for dinnertime. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within each of the care rooms.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and 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.

There was a designated nap time in a cot room adjacent to the Wobbler Room. Stackable beds and cots were available for sleep time for children attending the Toddler room.

Supporting Relationships

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes on an online application which is immediately available to parents.

Physical and Material Environment

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, rest areas with books, home corners and dress up areas. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos, birthday displays, visual routines and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises. Staff advised that children from each care room had access to the garden twice per day. The outdoor space is directly accessible from the Junior and Senior preschool rooms. The play area has a variety of age and stage appropriate equipment and was adequately resourced.

Programme of Activities

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in discussions observed both in play and at snack time where the adults encouraged the children to use words to describe their thoughts and feelings.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Visitors to the premises were required to sign in on arrival to the premises.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication 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 four care rooms.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers and mouthed toys.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly.
- Cleaning schedules were available in all care rooms and the service appeared clean.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were observed by the inspectors to be cleaned before and after snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of anti-febrile medication and prescribed medication and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required.

- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspectors.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes on an online application. Discussion with staff demonstrated that they were familiar with safe sleep guidelines. Documented sleep checks were reviewed for the previous week. All were completed, in date and staff signature included.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

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)

A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Six staff members hold current FAR certification.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on the premises.

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)

There was evidence of regular fire drills having taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 8th July 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated 10th January 2025

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the pre-school rooms

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The manager was able to demonstrate that the children attending the service were adequately supervised throughout their day.