

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023WD003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Play Together Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 7 Block A, Mount Suir Manor, Gracedieu, Co. Waterford		
<b>Eircode:</b>	X91 YC53		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rebekah Donnelly		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	15/08/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM 11
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Bradshaw		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

Play Together Childcare is a full-day care service on the outskirts of Waterford city. The service is registered to operate from 08:00 to 17:30 and care for children aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The service has two rooms allocated for pre-school children on the ground floor unit of a retail and apartment complex. On the day of the inspection, only one room was in operation. There are also sanitary areas, a kitchen, and two designated rooms for the care of school-age children.

The enclosed grassed outdoor area is at the rear of the apartment complex.

The registered provider has two additional early years services in Waterford city.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs six staff members who care for the preschool children. This includes a manager, the designated person in charge and a second-named staff member to deputise if required. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

The staff working with the preschool children held the minimum QQI Quality Qualifications Ireland level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;  
Regulation 19. 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 28 – Insurance.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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)(b)(c)

The service employed a manager and a designated person in charge, and a person to deputise if required. The manager was present on the day of the inspection. The line management was displayed on the parents' noticeboard.

(2)

The inspector reviewed six staff files, including the manager's.

(a)(b)

There were validated references for all employees available for review.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for staff members who had worked or lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with children had achieved 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the pre-school children.

During the morning, there were 3 staff caring for 16 children.

During the afternoon, there were 3 staff caring for 11 children. The manager was available to assist in the rooms as required.

### 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*

*(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)(a)(b)

On the day of the inspection, there was one room in use for the care of the pre-school children. The school-aged children used two additional rooms. The Pre-school room was well-resourced with age-appropriate furniture, materials and toys for the ages and stages of development of the children attending.

On the inspector's arrival, the children were returning from outdoor play. The staff explained as the forecast was for a very hot day, they had organised for the children to play in the garden earlier than usual, and the plan for each day was flexible to accommodate the children's needs.

Snack time was observed to be a social occasion with staff sitting with the children and joining in their conversations. Children were offered a fruit plate as a snack and were encouraged to drink water throughout the morning. After the snack, a story was read, and some children were observed to turn their chairs and listen and engage with the storyteller.

A staff member set up two sensory activities – a car wash at the water tray and sand play and invited children to join. Children were reassured that they would swap activities after five minutes, and they were shown where the timer was so they could monitor it themselves. One of the children approached the staff and asked where the 'roly things' were for the car wash- the staff member apologised and added different-sized sponges to the activity and demonstrated how they could be used like the 'roly things'.

Two children chose not to participate and were encouraged to choose their own activity from the low shelving and storage boxes.

The staff interactions with the children were warm and engaging. The management of behaviour was gentle and productive. Staff were observed to sit at the children's level and discuss why they were sad or upset and then

checked back in to see if the children were happy with the outcome. This supported the children's understanding of sharing and taking turns.

Children were observed to be familiar with the daily routine, and once the 'tidy up song' was played, they began putting away their toys and materials. Then they all participated in the Goldfish interactive song as the staff prepared the room for lunchtime.

Partnership with parents and guardians was promoted through the service's open-door policy, and the parents dropped off and collected the children directly from their rooms, which provided the opportunity to talk directly with the staff caring for their child. A parent's notice board displayed policies, contact details, staff responsibilities, and the persons in charge.

### 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 was secured on the inspectors arrival at the service. There was an intercom system to allow access. This assisted in preventing unauthorised access or exit to or from the building.
- The outdoor area was secure and fully enclosed to the rear of the building.
- The storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were restricted to children.
- Water was thermostatically controlled at a temperature of no more than 43°C.
- Staff were observed to be aware of water spillage during the water play and used towels and mops to manage the wet floor without impeding the children's play.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands before eating their dinner, after outdoor play and after toileting. Staff supervised children with their handwashing.
- There was liquid soap, warm water and paper hand towels available for handwashing.

### Fire Safety:

- Exit doors were unobstructed during the inspection, and the emergency lighting was mounted over these doors.
- The children's and staff attendance was recorded accurately, which would assist in a safe evacuation if necessary

### 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 has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. One staff member was trained to the first aid responder standard and available on the day of inspection.

(2)  
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were in each room and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the kitchen, with an additional first aid kit for use in the garden.

### 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 on the premises, and
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
  - (b) an employee, and
  - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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)

Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these was maintained. The last fire drill was carried out on 3 July 2025.

(b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment, fire alarms and smoke alarms. The maintenance was carried out in March 2025 and June 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallways and exits of the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for a full-day care service for 88 children.