

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2024FL005

Name of Service: Fonthill Lodge Childcare

Address of Service: 1 Chapel Wood Drive, Hollystown, Dublin 15,

Eircode: D15 HP21

Name of Registered Provider: Conor Lynch, Maurice Lynch

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 19/08/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	21

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
2nd Floor, Unit 4/5
The Nexus Building
Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Ballycoolin
Dublin 15 | D15 CF9K

Inspection undertaken by: C Kerrigan

Title: Early Years Inspector

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

Fonthill Lodge Childcare is a privately owned service which operates from a purpose-built detached premises located in a residential area in Dublin 15. The service is one of three services owned by the registered provider. This service is registered to operate a full-time, part-time, and sessional service to a maximum of 50 children aged 0 to 6 years old from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme, the ECCE session operates from 9.00am to 12.00 noon. The service is also registered to provide school age childcare in the afternoon.

There are six rooms, with the layout as follows:

Ground Floor: There are three care rooms, namely the Nest which currently caters for children from 10 months to 1 years old, The Caterpillar room which currently caters for children aged 15 months to 20 months old, Bumblebee's room which currently caters for children from 18 months to 2 years. There is also a kitchen, reception area, nappy changing facilities and sanitary accommodation for staff and children.

First Floor: There are three care rooms, namely Green room which caters for children aged 2-3 years of age, The yellow room which caters for children aged 3-4 years of age. The Purple room/ECCE room was not in use on the day of inspection. On this floor there is also a staff room, office, nappy changing and sanitary facilities.

On the day of the inspection only five care rooms were open.

There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs fourteen adults to work within the service, this includes a General Manager, the person in charge, a deputy person in charge, a cook who can also provide cover in the care rooms when needed and ten childcare staff who work directly with the children. The service also employs a staff member to work with school aged children. The general manager and the person in charge manage the oversight of the service and provide cover when needed in the rooms. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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. 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.

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8)(a)

Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child.

Regulation 16 (j)(k) Record in relation to a pre-school service.

Regulation 19 (1)(a) 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.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child, Regulation 16 (j)(k) Record in relation to a pre-school service, Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Bumblebee room and Yellow room.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the general manager on the day of inspection under Regulation 23 in relation to an identified a significant safety risk. A written response was received on the 20 August 2025 which mitigated the significant risk. Further details are available under Regulation 23.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the general manager, the person in charge, the deputy 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
- (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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that the person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The files of all fourteen adults working within the service were reviewed in full on the day of inspection.
- (1) The registered provider ensured that twenty-one written and validated references were available from a previous employer for the adults working within the service.

- (2) The registered provider ensured that seven written and validated references were available from a person other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
 - (c) The registered provider ensured that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the fourteen adults working directly with the children. The service also demonstrated adherence to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The registered provider ensured that police vetting was available for seven adults who had resided in a state other than the state of Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that all references and Garda vetting procedures were completed prior to the fourteen adults being allowed access or contact with the children attending the preschool service.
 - (4) A review of all fourteen staff qualifications indicated that eleven adults who work directly with children held a major award at Level 5 or higher in early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualification 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.*
- (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) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working with the children in the service at all times throughout the day. Nine early years staff were available in the building to meet the care needs of twenty-eight children who were present on the day of inspection.

- (2) The registered provider ensured that the adult child ratios were maintained within the service on the day of inspection. This was further evidenced in the staff roster.
- (8) (a) A review of the staff roster and conversation with adults present on the day indicated that the registered provider ensured that there were two adults present during the operational hours of the service.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept for each child attending the pre-school service. The written records of ten children were reviewed, and five records were found to be fully completed; they contained the following information.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that the name and date of birth was completed in each child’s record.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that the date on which a child first attended the service was recorded.
 - (d) The registered provider ensured that the name, address and telephone number of the parent or guardian along with an emergency contact person who could also be contacted was recorded in the child’s file.
 - (e) The registered provider ensured that an authorised person for the collection of each child was recorded.

- (f) The registered provider ensured the details of any illness, disability, allergy or special needs of the child relevant to their care within the service was recorded.
 - (g) The registered provider ensured that the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was recorded.
 - (i) The registered provider ensured that written consent was present for children needing appropriate medical treatment in the event of an emergency.
- (3) (c) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was available for inspection and on the premises by the Inspector.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (h) The registered provider did not ensure that the record of vaccines was fully completed in five of the records sampled. This posed a potential risk for children's safety in the event of an infectious disease outbreak.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has stated that they immediately contacted the parents of the children with incomplete vaccination records and obtained the missing information. All records have been verified to ensure they are complete. Managers will check and verify all vaccinations records at the point of enrolment and during routine audits.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the service have been sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 15(1).

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:

(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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (k) A sample of ten accident and incident forms were reviewed; these were found to be fully completed with all necessary information included.

(3) The registered provider ensured that a recording writing was available for the inspection on the premises by the Inspector.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (j) The registered provider did not ensure that four of the ten records sampled were completed in full, the following information was missing from four records.

- One record was missing a parent signature. This poses a risk to parents being unaware of medication administered.
- One record was missing a manager’s signature; this is at variance from the service policy on medication administration.
- Two records were missing both parental and staff signatures for medications given over a period of eight days. It is acknowledged that the records were completed in full for the first day but not for subsequent days. This poses a risk to children potentially receiving medication in error and is at variance form the service policy on medication administration.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has stated that they have replaced the previous medication form with the correct one, which requires signatures from staff, parents and a witness. Staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring parental consent and signatures are obtained for all medications. Staff have been instructed to bring the record to the manager for review and a signature, daily. A review of policy and procedure will be included in our staff meeting in September 2025. Daily checks by room leaders to confirm medication forms are fully completed before the end of each day. Managers will verify all medication records daily. The policy will be refreshed with staff to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 16(1)(j).

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 registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the service in the following ways:

Basic Needs

- The children were provided with regular snacks and a hot lunch which were freshly prepared site, throughout their time in the service. On the day of inspection, the morning snack observed consisted of yoghurts, appropriately cut up fruit and ham and cheese sandwiches. The hot lunch observed consisted of chicken curry and rice. Alternative dietary options were provided. Children drank from individual water bottles or

individually labelled cups. Mealtimes were observed to be a social and pleasurable experience for the children.

- There was a rest area in each care room if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- Nappy changing was observed on the day of inspection and was completed in line with the service policy. Through conversation with staff nappy changing was completed on a scheduled basis and as needed throughout the day. It was observed that older children who were toilet trained were observed to have unrestricted access to the sanitary facilities.
- Staff were observed to be aware of the needs of a child who was settling into the service. Staff demonstrated the use of distraction and physical comfort to support this child's transition. Staff were able to discuss the settling in process specific to this child. This reflected the settling in policy within the service.

Supporting Relationships.

- The adults in the rooms sampled were observed to interact with the children in a respectful manner. Adults were observed to provide physical comfort when needed and involved themselves in the children's play when invited.
- The adults in the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and warm manner.
- The adults in the service reported that information such as toileting, food and sleep is shared with parents daily, with drop off and collection times used as opportunities for information sharing.

Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture observed in the rooms sampled were of low level and appropriate for the children attending, with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment throughout the day, this was scheduled but also available to the children if and when they needed. The area had absorbent artificial flooring, a climbing frame, slide, see saw, a mud kitchen, balls, tyres and a covered sand box giving an array of choices for gross motor and sensory play.

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 main entrance to the service was secured upon the Inspectors unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons. This also prevent the children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were placed on high shelving away from children's reach.
- The outdoor area was fully secured, enclosed by a high wall.

Infection Control:

- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing potential cross contamination.
- Pedal bins were in use in the care rooms and sanitary areas ensuring appropriate disposal of waste.
- Children's blankets for sleep were individually labelled and stored, preventing potential cross contamination.
- All cots were clean and fitted with a wipeable and waterproof covering, enabling thorough cleaning between uses.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be given on the day of inspection, however staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required.
- Temperature reducing medication was available within the service if required.

Safe Sleep:

- There were enough cots available for the children who required sleep.
- The registered provider ensured that physical 10-minute sleep checks were undertaken by adults and recorded.

Fire Safety:

- Fire escape routes were clear from obstruction and easily identifiable in each room.
- Adults were able to clearly outline fire drills and evacuation procedures.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The temperature of a sink accessible to children in both the Yellow and Green rooms exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. This posed a scald risk to children. The following was observed.
 - The inspector recorded a temperature of 51.2°C in the sink located in the Yellow room. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the service on the day of inspection in respect to this risk. The actions submitted by the General Manager on the 20 August 2025 were sufficient to address this risk.
 - The temperature of a sink within the Green room which was accessible to children was recorded at 49.5°C at 11:48am.
2. The registered provider did not ensure that a safe ambient room temperature was maintained between the recommended 18 and 22°C in the Bumblebee and Yellow rooms on the day of inspection, the following was observed.
 - An ambient temperature of 23.2°C was recorded at 11:36am in the Yellow room and 23.6°C in the Bumblebee room at 11:02am. It is acknowledged that water was freely available to the children and that windows were open to promote air flow. The increased temperature poses a risk of potential overheating for young children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A written response was received from the service on the 20 August 2025 stating that the anti-scald valve had failed but was replaced immediately following inspection. The water temperature was checked and recorded at 39°C which was within safe operating range. Daily checks of water temperature in all child-accessible sinks will be logged for review by management, and any deviation will be reported and immediately addressed without delay.
2. The service has stated that the windows were opened, and blinds pulled down and water was made freely available to children. Room doors will be left open when safe to promote airflow between rooms. Fans will be placed at windows to circulate cooler air when necessary. Staff will record ambient room temperatures and any readings above the recommended range will trigger immediate actions to cool the rooms or go outside when possible. Management will review temperature logs weekly to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic and documentary evidence has been submitted.
2. Evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the service have been sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

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 persons trained in first aid to include First Aid Responder (FAR) were available to the children during the operational hours of the service.

- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was safely stored and easily accessible in a conspicuous position within the premises.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the preschool service.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 8 July 2025.
 - (b) A record was available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating it was last serviced in August 2025, and the number type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms throughout the service, these were last serviced in July 2025.
- (2) (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the Inspector.
- (4) A notice of procedures was displayed throughout the service indicating the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that preschool children attending the service were supervised at all times.

This was evidenced in the following way:

- At 2:46pm, two children from the Green room, aged between 2-3 years old were observed to have access to the sanitary area unsupervised, at 2:59pm one child was observed to be calling for help as the toilet door was stuck. At this time the Inspector observed that the Green room door was closed preventing children from being supervised by sight or sound. This posed a potential risk to children's safety.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- The service has stated that staff were spoken with to understand why supervision procedures were not followed, they confirmed that this was an oversight and not reflective of the services established supervision practices. Staff were reminded of the expectation to keep the Green room door opened to ensure that children can be supervised by sight and sound at all times and staff were reminded of the procedure to use the in-room phone to call for assistance from the office if needed. Additional support was provided to the staff to ensure full understanding of the supervision requirements. Supervision practices including the use of the phone for assistance and keeping doors open for visibility was reiterated with all staff and will be included for discussion in the staff meetings. Management will carry out daily checks to ensure doors are positioned to allow supervision by sight or sound at all times and any future lapses will be formally documented and followed up with retraining.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider was sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 27.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the premises was insured as a full day care service for the maximum number of children registered. The certificate reviewed had an expiry date of the 27 March 2026.