

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025MN001				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Crayon Box				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Latlurcan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan				
<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 Y2H3				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Christopher Flack				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	25/11/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>41</td> <td>PM</td> <td>19</td> </tr> </table>	AM	41	PM	19
AM	41	PM	19		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Skinnader and M Flood				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

The Crayon Box is a privately owned service which commenced operation in 2025. It provides a full daycare, part time sessional service to children aged 0 – 6 years. The service caters for a maximum of 119 children. The service is situated in the town of Monaghan. It operates from a purpose-built building and is open from 8am – 5.30pm Monday – Thursday and from 8am – 5.00pm on a Friday. There are 3 care rooms, sanitary accommodations, two offices and a kitchen. There are 2 outdoor areas to the rear and front of the building.

### Staffing

There are 21 staff members and 2 students employed in the service. There are 15 staff members including the registered provider who work directly with the preschool children. There is 1 staff member employed as financial controller and 1 in administrative duties. There is 1 staff member employed as a cleaner and 2 for kitchen / laundry duties. One staff member is employed solely to work with the school aged 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 registered provider, 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.

(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) The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived at the service.

All 21 staff files and both student files were reviewed:

(2)(a)(b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 17 members of staff and 2 students.
- One staff member had 1 written and validated reference and 1 written reference.
- 2 staff had 1 written and validated reference.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members and both students and all were found to be within the 3 yearly re-vetting timeframes.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection international police vetting was available for the 4 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that 15 staff members working directly with the preschool children had a minimum Level 5 qualification.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

- One staff member did not have 2 written and validated references available for inspection.
- Two staff members did not have a 2<sup>nd</sup> written and validated reference.
- The second reference for one staff member was not validated.

(d) There was not an officially translated copy of the international police vetting for 1 staff member available for inspection.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)

To ensure full compliance with Regulation (2)(a) the registered provider will ensure that all staff have two written and validated references on file at all times. Following the inspection, all missing and unvalidated references have been obtained and validated and all staff files are now fully compliant. Compliance will be monitored using a staff file checklist and through quarterly audits of personnel files to ensure ongoing adherence.

The registered provider will ensure a staff recruitment and personnel file checklist is used for all staff to confirm that two written and validated references are in place. No staff member will commence employment until both references have been received and validated. I will review and sign off on all staff files prior to commencement and will complete quarterly audits of personnel files to ensure ongoing compliance.

(d)

To ensure full compliance with staffing requirements, the provider will ensure that officially translated copies of international police vetting are obtained and retained on file for any staff member where vetting is issued in a language other than English. Following the inspection, an officially translated copy of the international police

vetting for the staff member identified has been obtained and is now available for inspection.

The registered provider will ensure that officially translated copies of all international police vetting documents are obtained and placed on staff files where vetting is issued in a language other than English. No staff member will commence employment until the translated vetting is received. A staff recruitment checklist will be used to verify compliance, and the registered provider will complete quarterly audits of personnel files to ensure ongoing adherence.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copies of 5 written and validated references and English translation of international police vetting.

### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider's response and supporting information was reviewed by the Inspectorate and accepted. The non-compliances have been addressed.

## **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) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

#### **Preschool Room:**

There were 14 preschool children (aged 2 years 11 months – 4 years) attending this room with 4 staff members.

The child adult ratios were correct.

**Toddler Room:**

There were 14 preschool children (aged 1 year 11 months - 2 years) attending this room with 4 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

**The Creche Room:**

There were 13 preschool children aged (1 year to 1 year and 11 months) attending this room with 5 adults. One student was also present in a supernumerary capacity in the room.

The child adult ratios were correct.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times.

## 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

There were 3 care rooms in operation in the service namely Preschool Room, Baby Room and Toddler Room.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service.

**Basic needs:**

- The children in the service were observed to move freely in the care rooms. All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area and were dressed appropriately for going outside. Staff were observed to assist and support the children with play and in choosing toys indoors and in getting dressed to go outside.
- In the Baby Room child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children's sleep routines. The staff were also alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children with 1 child who fell asleep in the highchair as they finished their dinner being lifted out and brought straight to a cot. The children attending the Toddler Room were observed to access the day beds set up in the sleep room at the allocated sleep time after dinner.

- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children in the various rooms after toileting.
- Nappies/ pullups were changed regularly and in a timely manner in all rooms with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- Throughout the service attention was given to personal care such as nose blowing, the use of bibs for feeding and cleaning faces of the smaller children after their dinner.
- A morning snack of rice cakes, yoghurts and fruit was provided. Dinner on the day of inspection was homemade chicken curry with veg and potatoes for the children in the Baby Room. In all the rooms the consistency of the dinners was age appropriate. Dinners were saved for 2 children who were sleeping and served once they woke up. The afternoon snack was crackers and cheese. Drinks were given to the children at mealtimes. The children who required additional time to finish their meal and snacks were facilitated and supported by the staff.

### Supporting Relationships:

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in all the rooms. For example *“well done...that’s lovely sharing”, “do you like that... yes its lovely curry...its yummy curry”, “good girl ready to go will we wash our hands together...?”*
- The staff in the rooms used an electronic application the “app” to communicate with parents about their child’s activities, sleep and food intake during the day. The staff were also observed to communicate verbally with parents at collection time.
- A key worker system was in place in the rooms which supported the development of positive relationships with the children and their families. The key worker was responsible for documenting activities and progress of the children’s learning and development. In the Preschool Room a ‘hot air balloon’ collage of the children’s photographs and their allocated key staff member was displayed.
- The connection with family and home was further supported in the service with a display of “Our family tree family photographs”.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The Toddler and Preschool Rooms were bright and spacious with specific areas of interest developed. These areas were well resourced with a variety of toys and equipment for the numbers attending. The defined interest areas included; somewhere to relax, plus toys and equipment available to promote and

enhance sensory play and to develop fine motor skills. Reading areas were also available to support language and literacy development and imagination.

- A soft comfortable area in the Baby Room consisted of bouncy chairs, matting on the floor, fleece blankets and cushions.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in all rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children enabling them to choose which items they wished to play with. The registered provider also stated that extra toys were available in a storeroom.
- The outdoor area to the front of the building was accessed by children attending the Toddler and Preschool Rooms. This was a spacious enclosed area with a combined tarmac and artificial grass surface. The children from the Baby Room accessed the partially covered area to the rear of the building.

### Programme Of Activities

- A Daily Routine was displayed in each care room and included a written and photographic account. Long and short-term plans were display in the room.  
Activities that promoted the children’s language development such as the social conversations and song singing between the staff and children were also observed.
- In the Baby Room there was an “Emerging Interests” wall where observations of the children and their “likes” were recorded. In the Preschool room “my pre-school journey at the Crayon box” scrapbooks were available for each child. These were in development and included a collection of photographs and observations of the children’s learning journey. These books are sent home at the end of the year as a ‘keep-sake’ for each child.
- A variety of the children’s artwork was on display including; In the Preschool Room space themed planets, sticking and gluing pictures and in the Toddler room “our amazing art” included pictures of ‘snowmen’, ‘our car tracks’ rainbows and hedgehogs.
- The registered provider stated that they would be engaging in the support of an outside agency to develop and support quality practice in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

1. The children’s drink cups were stored in kitchen areas off the rooms and not readily accessible within the care rooms to the children should they require a drink.
2. In the Baby Room the defined Home Corner which was readily accessed by multiple children was poorly resourced with supporting equipment. The kitchen equipment available consisted of a pizza cutter, 1 plate

and 1 wooden cup. There was also a basin in the sink. This does not adequately support the 13 children who were present play experiences and also led to minor disagreements between children over the 1 cup and plate.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. To ensure children have continuous and independent access to drinking water within the care rooms, all children's drink bottles will be stored in the room at a child-friendly height and remain accessible throughout the day. Following the inspection, a child-height table has been purchased and placed in the room, and all children's water bottles are clearly labelled and readily accessible at all times.  
The registered provider will ensure that children's drinking water is available within each care room at all times and stored at a child-friendly height. Staff will complete daily room checks to confirm water bottles are accessible and labelled. This requirement will be reinforced during staff supervision and team meetings, and room layouts will be reviewed regularly to ensure children can independently access drinking water throughout the day.
2. To ensure the Home Corner in the Baby Room adequately supports the play and developmental needs of all children, the area will be fully resourced with sufficient, age-appropriate play equipment to meet the needs of the group. Following the inspection, additional Home Corner resources have been purchased and introduced, including multiple plates, cups, kitchen utensils and role-play items, ensuring there are sufficient materials to support shared play and reduce conflict among the 13 children.  
The registered provider will ensure that the Home Corner in the Baby Room is consistently well resourced with sufficient, age-appropriate equipment to meet the needs of all children using the area. Regular room and resource checks will be completed to monitor quantity and condition of equipment, and resources will be reviewed and replenished in line with the number of children attending. Staff will observe play to identify emerging needs and will report any resource gaps promptly to ensure timely replacement or addition.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of new toys and equipment ordered and of the drinks tables.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed. The sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions will be for review at the next inspection.

### 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.*

### Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that all reasonable measures were 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 as specified below:

#### General Safety:

1. In the Baby Room skin cream and powder belonging to 1 child was stored in their bag within the care room on a low-level peg which was potentially accessible to the children. This is a health and safety risk.
2. The room temperature in the Preschool Room was recorded at 23.2° C at 11.45am which exceeds the room temperature of 18 – 22° C. This went unnoticed by staff and when questioned they confirmed to the inspector there was no thermometer in the room.

#### Infection Control:

3. In the Baby Room during 1 round of nappy changes a staff member was observed to not change their apron between each nappy change. This is an infection control risk.
4. Not all toys which some of the children placed in their mouths during play were removed to the "dribble box" for cleaning before being put back into toy boxes in the care room. This is an infection control risk.

#### Safe Sleep:

5. Room temperatures in the sleep rooms exceeded the recommended safe sleep room temperatures of 16 – 20 °C. For example, in the Toddler sleep room at 2pm the large room temperature was recorded at 21.9° C and the small room was 22.4° C. At 14.05 in the sleep room off the Baby Room the room temperature was recorded at 21.9 °C. This elevated temperature went unnoticed by staff until brought to their attention by the inspectors when the windows and doors were then opened. This is a health and safety risk.

6. Some staff were not recording the correct sleep room temperatures on the sleep log in both sleep rooms for example in the Baby Room sleep room the room temperature was being recorded on the electronic sleep log at the electronic application setting of 19.9 °C instead of the actual room temperature e.g. 21.9 °C. This is a health and safety risk.
7. In the small sleep room there was no separate thermometer to check the room temperature. This was also confirmed by two staff.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. All personal care items such as skin creams and powders will be stored securely in a locked medical storage facility and kept out of children's reach at all times. Following the inspection, arrangements have been made to remove all such items from children's bags and low-level storage, and they will be stored immediately in a designated locked medical storage unit within the service.  
  
The registered provider will ensure that all personal care items, including creams and powders, are stored in a designated locked medical storage facility and kept out of children's reach at all times. Staff have been informed of this requirement and will no longer store such items in children's bags or low-level areas. Daily room checks will be completed to confirm safe storage, and this practice will be reinforced through staff supervision and team meetings.
2. To ensure a safe and comfortable environment for children, the room temperature in the Preschool Room will be maintained within the recommended range of 18–22°C at all times. Following the inspection, a room thermometer has been installed in the Preschool Room, and staff have been informed of acceptable temperature ranges and actions to take if temperatures exceed these limits. Procedures are now in place for staff to monitor and record room temperatures daily and to take immediate action, such as adjusting heating or ventilation.  
  
The registered provider will ensure that a thermometer is present in the Preschool Room at all times and that staff monitor and record room temperatures daily to ensure they remain within the recommended range of 18–22°C. Staff will be trained on the actions to take if temperatures fall outside this range, including adjusting heating or ventilation and reporting concerns immediately. Compliance will be reviewed through daily room checks, staff supervision, and regular management oversight to ensure consistent adherence.

### Infection Control:

- To ensure effective infection control practices, staff will change aprons between each nappy change in line with the service's infection control policy. Following the inspection, the staff member was reminded of correct nappy-changing procedures, and additional disposable aprons have been made readily available at the nappy changing area. All staff have been re-briefed on infection control procedures, and adherence will be monitored through daily supervision and periodic practice observations to ensure ongoing compliance.

The registered provider will ensure that clear infection control procedures are followed during all nappy changes, including the use of a new disposable apron for each child. Disposable aprons will be consistently stocked and accessible at nappy changing areas. Infection control practices will be reinforced through staff training, supervision, regular practice observations, and compliance will be monitored through daily oversight and ongoing management checks.

- All toys mouthed by children will be removed immediately to the designated dribble box for cleaning and disinfecting before being returned to use. Following the inspection, staff were reminded of the toy-cleaning procedure, and the use and location of the dribble box was reinforced within the care room. Staff have been re-briefed on infection control practices, and compliance will be monitored through daily room checks and ongoing supervision to ensure procedures are consistently followed.

The registered provider will ensure that all toys mouthed by children are removed immediately to the dribble box for cleaning and disinfecting before being returned to use. Staff will receive ongoing reminders and supervision regarding this procedure, and dribble boxes will be clearly labelled and easily accessible in care rooms. Compliance will be monitored through daily room checks, practice observations, and regular staff supervision to ensure consistent adherence to infection control procedures.

### Safe Sleep:

- To ensure children's safety during rest periods, all sleep room temperatures will be maintained within the recommended safe range of 16–20°C at all times. Following the inspection, thermometers were installed in all sleep rooms, and staff were immediately instructed to monitor room temperatures during sleep times. When temperatures exceed the safe range, staff will take prompt corrective action, including opening windows and doors or adjusting heating, to restore appropriate conditions.

Ensure that thermometers are present and visible in all sleep rooms and that staff check and record room temperatures before and during sleep times to ensure they remain within the recommended range of 16–20°C. Staff will be trained on safe sleep temperature guidance and the actions required if temperatures

exceed limits, including ventilation and heating adjustments. Compliance will be monitored through daily checks, staff supervision, and regular management oversight to ensure consistent adherence.

6. To ensure children’s safety during rest periods, actual sleep room temperatures will be accurately measured and recorded on sleep logs at each sleep period. Following the inspection, staff were instructed to record temperatures directly from the room thermometers and additional guidance was provided on correct temperature recording procedures. Staff have been retrained on safe sleep temperature requirements and management will review sleep logs daily to ensure accuracy and compliance. Ensure that staff record sleep room temperatures directly from the room thermometers at each sleep period. Clear guidance on this procedure will be included in staff training and reinforced during supervision. Daily management checks of sleep logs will be completed to verify accuracy, and any discrepancies will be addressed immediately. Ongoing compliance will be supported through regular audits, staff supervision, and refresher training to ensure consistent and accurate practice.
7. To ensure children’s safety during rest periods, each sleep room will have its own dedicated thermometer to allow accurate monitoring of room temperatures at all times. Following the inspection, a separate thermometer has been installed in the small sleep room, and staff have been informed of its location and the requirement to monitor and record room temperatures during sleep times. Ensure that each sleep room has a dedicated, clearly visible thermometer in place at all times. Staff will be reminded to check and record room temperatures during each sleep period, and this will be verified through daily checks of sleep logs. The presence and condition of thermometers will be included in regular room safety checks, and compliance will be reinforced through staff supervision and ongoing management oversight.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence medicine cabinet and room thermometers, copy of Sleep and Rest Policy and Nappy Changing Policy.

### **Summary Comment**

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider’s response and supporting information. The non-compliances have been addressed.