

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD064
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Name of Service:	Play Together Creche
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Address of Service:	4 Carn Glas Court, Gracedieu, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 KC8P
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rebekah Donnelly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Office Cork Road, Waterford City X91 VX09
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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).

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Description of service

The service is based in a residential area on the outskirts of Waterford city. There are three care rooms (the Baby room, the Wobbler Room and the Toddler room), a kitchen, two sleep rooms, sanitary areas for both staff and children and an office. The outdoor space is adjacent to the building and has direct access from the Wobbler room. The service is registered to care for up to 38 children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. It operates from 07:30 to 17:45, Monday to Friday. The service is one of three services registered to the registered provider.

Staffing

The service employs 18 staff members including relief staff and a chef. On the day of the inspection, 8 staff cared for 22 children with the person in charge available for support if required. The registered provider does not work directly 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4)(7) – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11(1)(2) – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink;

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Regulation 24 - Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26(1)(4) – Fire Safety Measures;

Regulation 27 – Supervision.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN 3262	22/07/2026	Evidence of Garda vetting was not available for one staff member who had access to children. The vetting disclosure must be submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate prior to the person have access or contact with children.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventative actions which were accepted by the inspectorate. The Garda vetting was submitted to the inspectorate on the 13 August 2026.	

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

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Compliance Information

(9)(1)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. There was a clear management structure with a notice with the name of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge displayed in the hallway.

(9)(2) Following a review of information available on the day and a discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that six staff had been employed since the last inspection, these staff files were reviewed. In addition, five Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed as they required renewing since the previous inspection.

(a)(b) The required references were available to the inspector.

(c) The inspector reviewed four additional Garda disclosures, and the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documentation reviewed demonstrated that police vetting was not required.

(9)(4) Documents available demonstrated 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 Qualification Framework.

(9)(7) Discussion with staff and documents reviewed demonstrated that the registered provider had ensured that staff were supervised and supported. Staff described how they were offered opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD). Records reviewed evidenced ongoing training and upskilling of staff. Evidence reviewed included certificates of attendance for the following courses: Children First Child Protection, Food Safety, Using Positive Language and Promoting Positive Interactions, the updated Aistear, Introduction to Play Therapy and Effective Room Leadership. It was noted that staff were encouraged to share ideas and knowledge on the service online application after completing training.

The service circulates quarterly newsletters to update staff on relevant information, updates on policy reviews and reminders of good care practices. Management described how one-to-one meetings are scheduled with room leaders who cascade the information to the rest of the team. Staff have access to an online staff portal with the services policies and procedures and other communication from management.

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Non-Compliance Information

(9)(2)(c) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 3262 served.

The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframe as outlines in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

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)

The was an adequate number of staff working with children throughout the day. On the inspector's arrival at 10:00 there were 22 children the care of 8 staff and at 15:30 there were 16 children in the care of 7 staff. The person in charge was available to cover breaks and to assist across the rooms if required.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

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

Compliance Information

The service offered a hot meal which was supplied by an external food company and prepared on site.

Parents of children in the baby room were required to provide the main meal for their children.

The daily menu was displayed in the hallway; on the day of the inspection chicken curry and rice was served. Staff described how they could request additional portions if a child was still hungry after their dinner. A snack was set aside for a child who was sleeping when it was served to the group.

The children were observed to have healthy nutritious snacks at 15:20, there was a selection of fruit, brioche bread, apple flavoured rice cakes and yoghurt. All the children had bottles of water which were accessible throughout the day, staff were observed to refill these bottles over the course of the inspection.

The children sat at low tables and had their dinner in an unhurried environment that promoted social interaction with their peers. In the baby room staff observed the children's cues and offered them food based on their individual needs. They sat at eye level with the babies and supported them to self-feed while chatting and making conversation with them.

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

Infection Control:

1. Soothers were not stored in individual containers and were noted to be kept loosely in baskets. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

2. The sleep room temperatures exceeded the recommended temperature of 18°C to 22°C. At 11:40 the room temperature was 24.4°C with two children sleeping in cots. While it is acknowledged, on the

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inspector's request, the person in charge placed a fan in the room, propped open the doors to create a cooling flow of air and ensure children slept in the minimum amount of clothes, the temperature remained high at 23.8°C at 12:15.

3. The sleep records did not record the child's breathing, colour and position as required by the services Safe Sleep Policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider stated that they have ensured that all soothers are stored in individual containers clearly marked with the children's names for easy identification. The procedures for sterilising soothers have been amended to include a footnote to remind staff that they are to be returned to the individual containers after cleaning. Staff have been reminded of the procedures for the storage of soothers, and the updated procedure has been displayed in the kitchen.

Safe Sleep:

2. The registered provider stated that they have hired a fan for the sleep room to manage the high temperature. Staff have been reminded to monitor and record the temperature when the children are sleeping.
3. The registered provider has ordered a Sleep/ Resting logbook with comprehensive details required on the record pages and staff have been shown how to record the required information correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence has been submitted
A copy of the updated procedure has been submitted.

Safe Sleep:

Evidence of the order for the record book was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Children's attendance was promptly recorded on the application the service uses.
- (3) (a) The entrance to the service was monitored by staff and can only be accessed with a code on a keypad or through the intercom system. Each staff member was observed to record their attendance during the day.
- (b) A record of visitors was maintained. The sign in book was in a conspicuous place in the entrance hall and on a review of the entries, they included the pest control company, fire safety company, a maintenance person and a water supply tester.

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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) Four staff had up to date first aid training to the level of first aid responder and were available to children at all times. The First Aiders names were displayed in the hallway along with emergency phone numbers.
- (2) The first aid kit was stored in the main hallway and easily accessible if required.

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.

(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 carried out monthly and recorded. The last two fire drills were recorded on the 3 July 2026 and the 10 June 2026.
- (b) Records, which included the type and number of equipment, were available to demonstrate that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained annually.
- (4) The evacuation procedures were displayed prominently in the hallway and the care rooms.

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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 registered provider ensured that the preschool children were appropriately supervised at all times.

Staff were suitable qualified and had extensive experience working with children. The staff: child ratios were maintained during the day, and additional staff were rostered to cover breaks.

The management ensured staff were inducted in line with their recruitment policy, with completed forms available to evidence the procedures. CPD training was included in part of the annual training plans.

The children's spaces were laid out to give children opportunities to be independent while staff actively supervised their play to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The Wobbler and Toddler group were in the outdoor area during the morning of the inspection. This space was fully enclosed keeping the children safe to move freely. Staff were noted to place themselves where children could be observed and supported if help was required. A staff member always stood by the steps to the climbing frame and encouraged children to come down the slide safely reminding them to sit carefully. Staff crouched at children's level at the sand tray and engaged in the game the children had devised. Two other staff moved between the children and interacted with them blowing bubbles and singing interactive songs.

Communication between the team was evident during the day for example, staff from the Wobbler room were noted to count the number of children returning to the room and communicated this back to the staff remaining in the outdoor area.

Staff were observed to allow children the opportunity to explore and push their own boundaries however they intervened when children required help. In the baby room a child was noted to pull themselves up to standing at a bar and move along by the wall, a staff member moved toys from the space to give them room and encouraged them to keep going.

The team were tuned to the children's needs and changed plans to accommodate them. While outside a child was displaying signs of being upset and the staff member offered them the option of going indoors to play. The child agreed and the option was given to the group some of whom agreed to go too.