

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL268
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Name of Service:	Skerries Creche
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Address of Service:	Skerries Creche, Ballygossan Close Golf Links Road, Skerries, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K34 FY71
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Farrell
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15.
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly & AM Coyle
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of service

Skerries Creche is an early years service which was established in Skerries, Co. Dublin in 1999 and is registered to accommodate preschool children from 0 to 6 years of age on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis. The service is registered to operate from 7:30 am to 6:00pm each weekday, with eligible pre-school children facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9:00am to 12:00pm daily for 38 weeks annually. The service relocated premises in 2025 and currently operate from a two-storey purpose-built property on the outskirts of Skerries village. On the ground floor there is one large care room with dividing doors used for the care of Baby/Toddler age group of children. On the first floor of the service the Preschool rooms are located. One separate sleep room is available on the ground floor of the service. The service kitchen and staff room are located on the first floor. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are fifteen staff members employed in the early years service by the registered provider. In addition, the registered provider works in the service on a daily basis and works directly with the children when needed. A manager is employed in the service who coordinates the day-to-day operations of the service. There is a chef who cooks meals daily for the children. The registered provider was present in the service during the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 24 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby/Toddler Room, Pre-Pre-school Room and Pre-school Rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16-Record in relation to pre-school service.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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

(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) There was a designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 8.50am. The registered provider arrived shortly afterwards and remained for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the registered provider and service manager, it was confirmed that 5 new staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection which was carried out on the 25 February 2025.

The full staff files for 5 new staff members were reviewed and the following was recorded:

- (a) Nine written validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) One written validated reference was available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

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(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 5 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 5 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Baby/Toddler Room there were 17 children aged 1 year 1 month to 2 years 9 months being cared for by 4 staff members including the service manager.
- In the Pre-Pre-school Room, there were 21 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years 8 months being cared for by 2 staff members during the ECCE hours of operation (9 to 12 midday).

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- In the Pre-school Room there were 8 children aged 4 years 8 months to 5 years months being cared for by 1 staff member.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing is kept of the following:

- (a) There was a recorded history of past employment and relevant experience for staff available for inspection.
- (i) There was a staff roster available.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(j) The medicine administration forms maintained in the service were not always complete and correct. For example:

- There was no record of written parental consent obtained from the parents in advance of one child for whom medicine was administered to on the day of the inspection.
- The paperwork did not include a section where a parent/guardian's signature would confirm that the parent was informed at collection of the dosage and last time of administration.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1)(j) The medication policy has been updated. The Manager asks parents to bring in a written letter of permission to administer any medication their child needs which is obtained prior to giving any medication. This signed letter must provide the date, name of the medication and the child's name. The letter is kept in the medication book where the parents sign daily. Staff to continue to document the administration of medication: Child's name, name

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of medication, dosage, time medication was administered and signed by two staff. Parents to sign the medication book daily.

Preventive Action

(1)(j) Staff to be reminded to document the administration of medication correctly. Parents to be reminded to provide the necessary letter prior to administering any medication. Management to do weekly checks on medication book and reiterate the policy to staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Updated Medicine Administration Policy

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 16 have been addressed.

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 following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed interacting and supporting children during mealtimes.
- Children's water bottles were accessible to the children in the care rooms throughout the day.
- The children's personal care needs were attended to promptly. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently.
- The children under two years of age slept in cots in the sleep room. Children aged over 2 years in the service who required sleep slept on floor beds mats in the sleep room.

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- All of the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children.
- The children appeared confident and content in their environment and sought staff out by name, in turn staff members were responsive to the children's needs.
- Staff members were observed communicating with parents and guardians when dropping off and collecting children from the service.

Physical and material environment:

- Throughout the care rooms the play materials and equipment were displayed and accessible on low level shelving to promote the children's choice and independence when selecting their play opportunities.
- A range of books were available throughout all of the care rooms to support the children's language and reading development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area was provided to the rear of the service. The outdoor area was surfaced with an impact absorbing surface and secured with railings. This outdoor area was resourced with ride in cars, ride on tractors, see-saws and footballs which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills. There was a playhouse with seating and a wooden kitchen for imaginative play.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic needs:

1. Water was not provided to the children when they were playing in the outdoor play area. This prevented the children from taking a drink spontaneously whilst they were outside.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

2. There were no family photographs displayed in either of the 2 preschool rooms on the first floor of the service. The family photographs that were on display in the Baby/Toddler room were positioned at too high a level for the children to see. This does not enable the children to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in the service and to maintain links with family and home.

Physical and material environment:

3. Some play materials were not visible and easily accessible to the children. Kitchen resources in the Home Corner area of the Baby/Toddler room were not easily accessible to children to play with. One child was observed to climb into a dolls cot whilst trying to access kitchen resources from the kitchen box.

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4. There were 2 dolls houses in the Baby/Toddler room, neither of which had accompanying visible resources such as dolls or furniture to enhance children's play.
5. In the Baby/Toddler room when children were observed to sit together to eat their meals together, one child was observed to be sitting in a chair that was not appropriate as the child's feet could not touch the ground.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Basic needs:

1. Staff to continue to offer water to children every 15 minutes and to encourage children to drink water. If children are going outside for longer than 15 mins they are encouraged to take their water bottles with them.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

2. Family photographs have since been moved from the stairs area to the preschool room walls. Photograph albums have been bought for children to fill with family photographs and to look at when they wish.

Physical and material environment:

3. Play materials have been made more easily accessible. More lower shelving has been bought, and the room has been rearranged to create different environments.
4. One doll house in the toddler room is used as a bookshelf, and the other doll house has furniture for it. More will be bought if necessary.
5. Smaller children will be placed in highchairs going forward.

Preventive Action

Basic needs:

1. Staff to remind children to take water bottles to the garden. Management to ensure that this occurs.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

2. To encourage staff to think of other ways to help children to develop links between home and creche life and to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness. This will be ongoing and discussed at any meetings going forward.

Physical and material environment:

3. Staff encouraged to link in together as much as possible to discuss the physical and material environment. If staff require materials to benefit the children's development, this will be discussed with management.

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4. Staff encouraged to link in together as much as possible to discuss the physical and material environment.
If staff require materials to benefit the children's development, this will be discussed with management.
This will be discussed at any team meetings going forward.
5. To remind staff to make sure that smaller children are to be seated in highchairs.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the following:

- Dolls house furniture
- Dolls house as a bookshelf
- Family Tree in Preschool room
- Toddler room interest areas and shelving units

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 19 have been addressed and will be reviewed 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.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with railings to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

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- Safe sleep practices were observed in the service. Children's position, breathing and colour was recorded on written sleep records and children were checked every 10 minutes.
- The ambient temperature in the cot room where children were sleeping was 19.5°C.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The play kitchen that was provided in the outdoor play area was in a poor state of repair with foam exposed beneath the damaged wooden exterior. This was a splinter risk for the children and unsuitable for them to play with.
2. The door on the play kitchen in the Baby/Toddler room was loose off the hinges. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Infection Control:

3. The children attending the preschool rooms on the first floor of the service had their afternoon tea which they brought with them from home and contained meat and dairy produce stored on shelving in the Preschool room and not stored under refrigerated conditions. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in illness.
4. Infection control measures were not always followed. The possible risk of the spread of infection was increased due to the following:
 - In the Baby/Toddler room one child's snack which consisted of crackers, cheese and strawberries was placed directly on the tray of the highchair. This posed an infection control risk.
 - The nappy changing mat in the Baby/Toddler nappy changing area was torn with foam exposed underneath. This posed an infection control risk as it could not be cleaned effectively.
 - Staff members were observed not to wash their hands after cleaning children's noses. This posed an infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

5. The services administration of medication policy was observed not to be followed as evidenced by medication administration paperwork that were reviewed in the Baby/Toddler room:
 - The paperwork did not include a section where a parent/guardian's signature would confirm that the parent was informed at collection of the dosage and last time of administration.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. Kitchen in the garden has been disposed of.
2. Doors have been taken off the kitchen due to a safety risk issue.

Infection Control:

3. All the staff are aware of our infection control policy. Staff take out all the perishables from lunch boxes and place them in the fridges in the kitchen on a daily basis. Staff to be more vigilant when checking the lunch boxes to make sure nothing is missed that poses a risk to the children.
4. Plates to be used for any teatime that is not in lunch boxes. Highchairs continued to be wiped down after every use with disinfectant spray. Nappy changing mat was replaced. Staff reminded about the importance of handwashing policy for infection control.

Administration of Medication:

5. All staff reminded about the medication policy. They are reminded to be extra vigilant when documenting child's name, date, medication, dose, time and to ensure that two staff sign. The staff are reminded that a letter is needed before administering any medication. Staff must ask parents to sign at the book daily.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Management to be more proactive in getting new equipment when necessary and getting rid of any damaged items as soon as possible.
2. All staff to be more observant and mindful of any safety risk issues and to report to management if necessary.

Infection Control:

3. Staff to be more vigilant when checking the lunch boxes to make sure nothing is missed that poses a risk to the children.
4. All staff informed about using plates for teatime and not placing food directly on highchair trays. Changing mats to be replaced more frequently. If a rip occurs it will be changed immediately. All staff reminded about the importance of handwashing at team meeting. Management to continue to monitor handwashing and encourage staff to do so as much as possible. This is to be reiterated at every staff meeting.

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Administration of Medication:

5. Management to continue to remind staff about the medication policy and to ensure it is being followed correctly. This is to be reiterated at all staff meetings.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a system was in place to sign the children in and out of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 57 children for full day care with an expiry date of 27 March 2027.