

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL328
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Name of Service:	Charlies Childcare
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Address of Service:	1-2 Water Rill, Waterside, Malahide, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K36 HY23
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ronnie Carroll
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	75	PM	61
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford and Á Dunne
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

Charlies Childcare is one of nine early years services operated by the registered provider in North Dublin. The service provides sessional and full day care for pre-school children from 1 – 6 years of age and operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday with eligible pre-school children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme daily. School-aged children are also accommodated in the service. The service is conducted from the ground floor of two separate but closely situated commercial corner properties located in a residential housing estate in North Co. Dublin. The two buildings are separated by a broad pedestrianised walkway and waterway. The Junior Building contains the Wobbler room, Toddler room and Senior Toddler room whilst the Senior Building has four care rooms in operation, namely Room 1, Room 2, Room 3 and Room 4. The service provides two separate designated sleep rooms in the Junior Building. A fully enclosed safety-surfaced outdoor play area is provided at the entrance of each of the two buildings.

Staffing

There are 23 staff employed in the service to include the chief operations manager, area manager, person in charge, a cook and 19 childcare staff.

The person in charge is not assigned to a care room but is available to provide assistance in caring for the children if required. 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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises, and facilities under regulations 9,11,19,22,23,24 and 29.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 19, 23, 24 and 29. As a result the inspectors spent time in the Wobbler, Senior Wobblers and the Toddler rooms in the Junior Building and Rooms 2 and 3 in the Senior Building.

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 chief operations manager, area manager, person in charge, two deputy staff 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

(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

The files of 9 new staff members employed in the service since the last inspection were reviewed.

- (2) (a) Fourteen validated written references were available from a past employer.
- (b) Four validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 23 adults. The service has also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting for 9 staff members employed in the service since the last inspection who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult were available for inspection.
- (4) Documentation was available to demonstrate that 9 new staff members employed in the service since the last inspection 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

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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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 15 staff working directly with 75 children aged between 1-6 years in the morning and 14 staff working with 61 children in the afternoon.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times.

Wobbler Room: 3 adults caring for 10 children aged between 1-2 years in the morning and 2 adults in the afternoon.

Senior Wobbler Room: 1 adult caring for 4 children aged between 1-2 years in the morning and in the afternoon.

Toddler Room: 2 adults caring for 10 children aged between 2-3 years in the morning and 3 adults caring for 9 children in the afternoon.

Room 1: 3 adults caring for 20 children aged between 3-5 years in the morning and 2 adults caring for 12 children in the afternoon.

Room 2: 3 adults caring for 16 children aged between 3-4 years in the morning and 3 adults caring for 11 children in the afternoon.

Room 3: 1 adult caring for 4 children aged between 2-3 years in the morning and in the afternoon.

Room 4: 2 adults caring for 11 children aged between 2-4 years in the morning and in the afternoon.

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was confirmed that two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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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)

Basic Needs:

- The staff members were observed to be kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and the atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. Transitions between activities such as outdoor play to mealtimes to free play to sleep time were managed by staff in a relaxed and organised manner.
- Healthy eating was promoted within the service with snacks and meals served at regular intervals with additional and alternative food options made available to the children if required. Drinking water was freely available to the children throughout the day. The staff members sat with the children at mealtimes encouraging conversations and extending interactions.
- Nappy changing was completed at set times and when required for younger children and older children were observed using the toilet under supervision, with assistance provided by the staff member when necessary.
- Children were observed moving freely within the care rooms and taking a break from activities and relaxing in a rest area in the care room which was equipped with soft matting, cushions and child sized chairs.

Physical and material environment:

- The care rooms were well resourced with an extensive range and quantity of equipment, toys and materials to support the children's independent thinking and extend their learning and natural curiosity.
- All equipment and materials in the care rooms were appropriate to the age and development of the children. The furniture provided in the room was low level and age appropriate with toys and play materials accessible.

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- Two outdoor areas were available to the front of the service and were equipped with sand trays, bikes, and cars, climbing frames, playhouses, balls, dolls and rackets. Space was available to enable the children to run and play games.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed working well together in supporting the children and transitioning from activities such as outdoor play and lunch time.
- Staff maintained daily records of each child's meals, sleeps, activities undertaken and nappy changes, these were shared with parents via an electronic application.
- The children were encouraged to share and take turns and assist their friends if needed during the day.

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

- Healthy eating was promoted in the service with a 3-week menu indicating the food available at mealtimes displayed in the service. Snacks and meals were provided by the onsite chef with individual food preferences and allergies incorporated into the daily menu.
- A breakfast of cereal and milk was available each morning, followed by a mixed fruit platter at 10am. A hot lunch of vegetable pasta was served from 11-12pm with children being offered additional portions if needed. Alternative choices of sandwiches, beans and toast were available should a child request it. An afternoon tea of chicken and lemon couscous was provided at 2pm and an afternoon snack of rice cakes and cream cheese at 3:30pm.
- Water was available on low level shelving or low tables for the children to access it as required throughout the day and was readily available to the children whilst they had their meals.

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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 service entrance gates and doors leading into both premises were appropriately secured with a digital keypad system to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years' service.
- Cleaning agents, blind cords, garden equipment and flexes were stored safely out of the reach of children. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service. The children in the care rooms were facilitated to wash their hands after outdoor play, after nappy changing, after using the toilet and before meals in sanitary facilities. Pedal bins were provided for the disposal of wastepaper in the sanitary facility.
- Soothers were labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Individual storage bags were available for the storage of sheets used by the children during sleep time.
- Mattresses in use were in good condition, and all had washable wipeable covers allowing for easy cleaning.
- Cots and low beds at sleep time were observed to be positioned with a minimum of 50 cm apart at sleep time.
- Nappy changing was completed as per service policy and procedure.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members completed 10-minute sleep checks to include each child's colour, breathing and position. Shoes and outer clothing such as shoes, tops and trousers were removed from children while they slept.
- Three children in the Toddler room under two years of age were observed sleeping on low contour beds. Documentation available demonstrated that a full sleep plan review had been completed by staff and that parents had been fully included in this decision. This is a requirement under best practice sleep guidelines issued by Tusla to the sector in September 2023.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff in the service ensured that the time of each child's arrival to the service and departure time was recorded in an electronic application.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(d) It was observed that the equipment, seating and materials in use within the service were well maintained and in a clean working condition.