

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS036
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Name of Service:	Timahoe Tots LTD
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Address of Service:	Timahoe, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 DD51
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deborah Quinn
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	03/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy
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 registered as a full day care service and is open from Monday to Friday. A service is provided to children aged between 1 and 6 years. The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey converted and extended domestic premises. Four pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, office, staff room and a standalone school aged childcare room area are provided. Two separate outdoor play areas and a pitch area are attached to the rear of the service. The service is located in a rural setting in the village of Timahoe, County Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider employs nine adults including a person in charge, a designated person in charge, a deputy designated person in charge, five childcare practitioners and two staff members for school aged childcare. Seven adults were present on 03 June 2026.

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;

Regulation 8 -Notification of Change in Circumstances - (1)

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

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Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1)(2)(8)(a)

Regulation 16 – Record of a Pre-school Service - (1)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)

Regulation 20 – Rest and play facilities

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 31- Notification of Incidents – (b)

however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 Premises (c) and (e).

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 designated person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

(1)
Subsequent to the last inspection which took place on 22 April 2024 the service submitted a notification of change in circumstances to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of a change to the number of children and staff in the service. The service also submitted another change request to the service and legal names. These changes were approved by Tusla registration office.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
The service did not submit a notification of change in circumstances to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of a change to the hours of operation of the service from 08:00 – 18:00 to 08:00 to 17:00.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)
The registered provider stated in the response that a notification of change was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of the change of hours to 08:00 to 17:00 and an email to confirm that the change has been accepted was received. (Confirmation included)
The registered provider will take responsibility for submitting any changes to the early year's inspectorate in the future in a timely manner.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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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*

(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)

A named person to deputise was available as required.

(b)

A named person to deputise was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider and the person in charge were not present in the service.

Ten staff files were reviewed including the file of the registered provider and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

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The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the files reviewed. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider from a past employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the ten files reviewed.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The staff members working directly with children held a major award at level 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were seventeen children attending the service in the morning and fifteen children in the afternoon supervised directly by seven adults throughout the day.

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(8)(a)

Staff sign in records indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)
Written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(j) and (k) were available and reviewed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)
There was no staff roster to support forward planning in the service to demonstrate room cover, break cover, opening and closing cover and first aid response cover in the service for the week ahead. Written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with (i) were not available.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(i)

The registered provider stated in the response that a staff roster has been implemented and will be reviewed on a weekly basis. It shows the staff working hours in each room, who cover breaks, the person in charge that week and it will display who provides the FAR cover for the week ahead. The staff roster is displayed in the canteen. The staff roster is checked daily by the person in charge and changes are made to it if staff are out sick, with who is covering or any other changes needed to demonstrate cover over all rooms. (Roster included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children were happily engaged in free play activities in the indoor and outdoor environments supported by staff members. Children enjoyed freedom of movement as they explored the various play opportunities. Regular nappy changes were carried out for children and good communication between the child and staff member was observed. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before dinner supervised by staff members. The main meal was prepared on site and consisted of boiled ham, carrots, broccoli, mashed potato with water to drink.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff used children's individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities and at mealtimes. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, trucks and animals. Fine motor skill toys including puzzles, blocks, pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters. Children's artwork

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was noted in the pre-school rooms. An exchange of information is provided between the service and parents in the morning and afternoon during drop off and collection. A social media platform is used to communicate information to families and scrapbooks record in picture and narrative the child's journey throughout the year. This is shared with parents at the end of the year.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable indoor and outdoor facilities were provided on the premises. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for the children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters.

(b)

Two separate sleep rooms were available equipped with three cots. Low level beds were in place for children over the age of two who required rest or sleep during the day. Soft furnishings were provided to support relaxation.

(3)(a)

A large garden area was located to the rear of the service. The perimeter was secured by a high-level wall and gates. The area had an artificial grass surface throughout and was segregated to provide areas for younger and

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older children to play. A pitch area was also available. A small, sheltered play area was noted. The outdoor play area was equipped with age and stage appropriate bikes, trikes, climb and slide units and sand trays.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The kitchen and the contents within were inaccessible to children at all times during the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted on a sleep log. Staff carried out a visual check every ten minutes on sleeping children. The sleep room temperatures were recorded at 20.1 and 20.9 degrees Celsius by the inspectors thermapen. A digital thermometer was noted in each sleep room.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the service and a fire assembly point was in place to the rear of the premises.

Outing:

Risk assessment documentation and checklists were in place in the service in respect of outings conducted from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety

1. It was observed that the entrance route door to the service at drop off time was not the exit route used at collection time. At the exit route door there was no physical barrier in place to prevent children from accessing the public road located to the front of the premises at collection time. This presented a potential risk to children's safety due to the presence of moving vehicles on the road. It is acknowledged that the designated person in charge took an immediate corrective action and changed the collection

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point location for parents to the original entrance route door and followed this up with signage and a notice to parents to inform them of the new practice.

2. Refrigerated storage facilities were not provided for the safe storage of children's morning and afternoon perishable snacks which were provided by parents and stored in the children's school bags throughout the day.

Administration of Medication:

1. A temperature reducing medication was not available in the premises in the event that a child with a temperature required it.

It is acknowledged that the designated person in charge took an immediate corrective action and temperature reducing medication was available in the premises before the inspection concluded.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider stated in the response that the collection point was immediately changed to the side entrance, and parents were informed by our social media group immediately of the collection change. Our collection policy was updated and submitted to show this change. The entrance door and exit door (the side door) will be always monitored. The service will use the internal gate as an extra barrier for children before they reach the door. We will not use the front door for entering or exiting the building. (Procedure included)
2. The registered provider stated in the response that a refrigerator has been purchased and placed in the ladybird room, so children in the ladybird room and turtle room can place their lunches in this refrigerator when they arrive. A second fridge has been placed in the butterfly room, for use by the butterflies and caterpillar room. All children's lunches are now placed into the refrigerators when they arrive in the morning. (Photographs included)

Administration of Medication:

The registered provider stated in the response that temperature reducing medication was purchased immediately and is now stored on the premises in a press in the kitchen. Temperature reducing medication will be checked weekly by the person in charge to make sure there is a supply and they are in date. (Photographs included)

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Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary and photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service. The inspector signed the visitor book on arrival.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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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)

Three adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). Six adults were qualified in cardiac first response (CFR)

One adult was present on 03 June 2026 to provide FAR cover between the hours of 08:00 and 13:30.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in a visible location in the butterfly room.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

1. No adult was available to provide FAR cover between the hours of 13:30 and 17:00 on 03 June 2026. It is acknowledged that the designated person in charge took an immediate corrective action for the FAR qualified staff member to remain on duty until the close of the service at 17:00 and to cover additional hours for the remainder of the week.

2. No person was available to provide FAR cover when this staff member would need to take their mandatory breaks on Thursday, June 4th and Friday June 5th.

(2)

1. The required four medium sized, eight large sized and four extra-large sized wound dressings were not in place in the first aid box as per the Quality Regulatory Framework.
2. A checklist as outlined in the Quality Regulatory Framework was not available to ensure sufficient quantities of in date supplies were available in the first aid box.
3. The closure catch on the first aid box was broken and required replacing.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
1. The registered provider stated in the response that there will always be a minimum of two FAR trained staff on the premises between the hours of 08:00 and 17:00. The service now has five staff trained in FAR. (Certificates included)
 2. The registered provider stated in the response that two extra members were trained in June 2026. The staff roster will include FAR staff for the week ahead and this will make sure we will always have a FAR trained staff member on site during opening hours and lunchtimes. The person in charge will check daily that this is adhered to. (Roster included)
- (2)
1. We now have four medium sized, eight large sized and four extra-large sized wound dressings in our first aid box. (Photographs included)
 2. A checklist has been added to the first aid box to ensure sufficient quantities of in date supplies are available. The first aid box will be checked by the person in charge weekly and replenished if needed, and the checklist will be used. (Checklist included)
 3. A new first aid box has been purchased. If a clasp is broken a new first aid box will be purchased. The first aid box will be checked weekly by the person in charge. (Photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary and photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 8 May 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in September 2025. The smoke alarms were serviced in May 2026.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2027.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
- There was no natural or mechanical ventilation in the sanitary accommodation attached to the turtle room.
 - There was no natural or mechanical ventilation in the sanitary accommodation located on the main corridor of the service consisting of nappy changing, two water closet facilities for use by children and staff sanitary accommodation.
- (e)
- There were an insufficient number of wash hand basins available in the sanitary accommodation in respect of the fifty-one children the service is registered to accommodate. A cubicle containing a wash hand basin with an additional water closet was "out of order" with signage displayed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c)
- The registered provider stated in response that mechanical ventilation has been installed in the sanitary accommodation in the turtle room. (Photograph included)
 - The registered provider stated in response that natural ventilation will be installed in the main sanitary area. This installation will take place by September 7th, 2026. (Quotation included)
- (e)
- The registered provider stated in response that the service now has five wash hand basins for children in respect of the fifty-one children the service is registered to accommodate. An extra wash hand basin has been installed in the toilet block. There is one wash hand basin in the turtle sanitary area, three wash hand basins in the toilet block for children and one wash hand basin in the butterfly sanitary toilet totalling five wash hand basins for children, all in working order. (Photograph included)
- All wash hand basin will be checked during risk assessments to make sure they are in working order. Steps for children will be provided at all sinks for the children.

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Summary Comment

In respect of corrective actions taken to date photographic and documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet regulatory compliance.

The proposed actions in respect of ventilation installation will meet the regulatory requirement upon completion in respect of (c) point 2 but remains outstanding until the evidence of works completed is submitted by September 7th, 2026.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge submitted the required notification of incidents to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of (b) within the 3 working day timeframe.