

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DY002		
Name of Service:	Isabella's Childcare		
Address of Service:	1 Shanliss Road, Santry, Dublin 9		
Eircode:	D09 ER29		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ronnie Carroll		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	03/06/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM 28
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Area 1 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson		
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

Isabella's Childcare is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 9 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 33 children aged 0 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday.

Currently there are no children under the age of one year old.

The service is operating under new ownership since September 2025 and is one of 14 services operated by the registered provider.

Isabella's Childcare operates from a two-storey converted retail building and has four care rooms to include the Baby Room (12 to 18 months old), Wobbler room (18 to 24 months old), Toddler room (2 to 3 years old) and Preschool room (2 to 5 years old). There are sanitary facilities located on each floor, and a cot room located off the Toddler room. Further sanitary facilities are available for staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs eight staff to work in the service, including an area manager, a person in charge, a kitchen staff member who is available to provide cover in the rooms and five staff who work directly with the children. There were eight staff present on the day of the inspection including the two persons in charge. The chief operating officer arrived in the afternoon to attend the closing meeting. 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 21, 23 and 25 however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under Regulations 8 and 29 These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler and Preschool rooms and did not include the Baby and Wobbler rooms. Regulation 11 was inspected across all rooms.

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 management team, 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a notification regarding the change of the person in charge was submitted to the Agency. It is acknowledged that a notification for this change in circumstance was submitted on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A CIC application was submitted and approved, and management will ensure all changes are submitted in a timely manner and in advance where possible.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of CIC approval.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 has been adequately addressed.

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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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The registered provider ensured that;

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.**
- (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.**
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, which was displayed in the hallway of the service.**

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- (2) Following a review of the service roster and discussion with the management team it was determined that eight staff were employed in the service and all eight of these staff members worked with the children. These eight files were reviewed, and the registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a) Eight validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) Eight validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight reviewed. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Documentary evidence was available that established that four adults who had lived in a State outside of Ireland for a period of longer than six months as an adult had international police vetting from that state available.
- (4) Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for the eight staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) Documentary evidence and discussion with the management team established that four staff members had commenced in employment prior to the checks to establish the validity of their references had been completed. Appropriate checks must be completed prior to adults having access to children in order to establish their suitability. It is acknowledged that there was documented evidence that attempts had been made to verify the reference sources.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service report that it was discussed with HR and Area Manager that in the event references cannot be contacted that an alternative reference is to be sought before employment can commence and will ensure that all references will be verified prior to start dates.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of qualified adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
 - There were five staff working directly with the children plus an additional three staff available to the 29 children present on the morning of the inspection and the 28 children present on the afternoon of the inspection.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. For example:
 - The staff and management team reported they were aware of the required ratios in the rooms.
 - The area manager and person in charge were available to provide cover for lunch breaks.

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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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)

(b) The following care practices were observed:

- Staff described how they provided for regular meals and snacks each day. This was further evidenced by a review of the menu plan and routine, a discussion with the chef and observation of snack and dinner time in the Toddler Room. Meals were accompanied by jugs of water which were available in the care rooms.
- Staff reported regular nappy changes were scheduled each day, and this was evidenced by observation and a review of the daily routine.
- Children were observed to have access to both adult-led and child-led indoor and outdoor play experiences on the day of the inspection that were suitable to their age and stage of development, and this was scheduled into the daily routine.
- Staff were observed to be familiar with the needs of the children and responded to their needs in a timely manner. This was further facilitated by documented care plans for those children who required additional strategies to assist them to engage in the daily experiences in the service.
- Strategies such as indicating what will happen next, planning and familiarity with routines enabled organised and timely transitions.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms, and was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such as home, mark-making, construction and library areas.
- Each of the themed interest areas were resourced with a range of props and materials accessible to the children, including a range of real-life props.
- The play materials and equipment available to the children was suitable for their age and stage of development.
- The outdoor environment was resourced with sufficient and adequate equipment for the number of children in attendance and it was appropriate for their age range and stage of development.

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

The following measures were observed to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- The main entrance gate was secured when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. This was managed and monitored via a closed-circuit camera, and a magnetic lock system. This restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored up high out of reach of children.
- All windows were fitted with restrictors, and blind cords were fixed out of reach of children.

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- Finger protecters were fitted on all doors throughout the premises.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed, with no observable hazards and an up-to-date risk checklist had been completed up to and including the day of the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members; and children were observed to handwash before and after mealtime.
- Mattresses were either wipeable or fitted with suitable mattress protectors.
- Recently painted walls and paintwork facilitated effective cleaning surfaces.

Administration of Medication:

- There were clearly documented procedures available for a child who required emergency medication, and staff reported they were aware of these procedures.
- Medication was stored appropriately, clearly labelled and out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to complete physical checks on the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every ten minutes, and a log was maintained of these checks.
- Suitable sleep equipment was available for the age range of the children in line with safe sleep guidance.
- Room temperatures were maintained with the recommended ambient temperature of 18-22 °C while children over the age of one year slept.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were clearly indicated, and unobstructed.
- All children were accurately recorded as present in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for a staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

- There was a build-up of dirt indicating ineffective cleaning practices which increased the potential risk of cross contamination. The following was observed:

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- The was visible dust in the upstairs sanitary area.
 - The was visible dust and dirt on the stairway.
 - There was a build-up of grime on the taps in the sinks in the Preschool and Toddler rooms.
 - The cleaning checklists for the first floor had not been updated for the week of the inspection.
3. Three of the seven nappy creams stored in a box in the ground floor nappy changing room were not individually labelled. This posed a risk of cross contamination should the wrong cream be used on a child.
4. The following bins did not support the effective disposal of waste material:
- The foot pedal operation was broken on the nappy bin in the ground floor nappy changing room.
 - There was no bin liner used in bin in the sanitary area on the first floor.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider reports that this Garda vetting application has been in progress for 6 months, since January 2026. At present the GV has still not returned, and the external agency tasked with handling the vetting have advised there is nothing they or the service can do to speed it up.
A live tracker that tracks all staff members vetting expiration dates has been put in place. The Area Manager and HR manager manage this, and all vetting is now processed at least 12 weeks in advance.

Infection Control:

2. The registered provider reports that the service has been deep cleaned and that all taps have been replaced. A cleaner has been recruited.
3. Nappy creams were labelled and the service reports they are now stored in children's individual labelled baskets.
4. The service reports that new bins have been purchased and will ensure these will be replenished if needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. No evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic and documentary evidence.
3. Photographic evidence.
4. Photographic evidence.

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Summary Comment

The non-compliances detailed in points 2-4 have been addressed. The registered provider's response did not contain any corrective actions to address the findings at point 1. This remains outstanding and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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) A review of the roster, and staff training files established that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was always available to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that:
- (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored by the kitchen and there was a sign displayed clearly indicating this.
 - (b) The first aid box was easily accessible and readily available.

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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

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) There was neither an openable window nor mechanical ventilation system available in the Wobbler room.
A suitable means of ventilation should be available in all rooms used by children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A mechanical ventilation system was fitted in the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 has been addressed. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.