

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DR003
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Name of Service:	Tigers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Block C, Beech Park, Cabinteely, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 EKP4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Therese Noonan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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

Tigers Childcare is a sessional preschool service located in a residential area in Cabinteely, Dublin 18. The service is open Monday to Friday, from 9.00am to 12.00pm for 38 weeks of the year and caters to children aged 3 to 6 years. A school age service is provided in the afternoon. The service is located in a two-storey purpose-built building on the ground floor of an apartment building. The building comprises of three care rooms, sanitary accommodation and a garden to the front of the premises. On the day of the inspection there were two care rooms in operation, the ECCE room and the Butterfly room which offers care and education to children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Staffing

There are currently 6 adults employed to work in the preschool service including the person in charge and 5 early years educators. Eight adults are employed to work in the school age service. The registered provider does not work in the service.

There were six adults present when the inspector arrived at the service, including the person in charge and five adults working directly with the children. The operations manager attended the closing meeting and two adults from the quality support team joined the meeting remotely.

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 and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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

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

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, the operations manager, the quality support team members, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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,*

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(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)

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge and the person appointed to deputise were on the premises at all times during the inspection.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. The role of each employee was on display in the reception area.

(2) Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3) and (4) was reviewed in respect of the six adults employed to work in the preschool. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda vetting was reviewed for all adults employed both in the preschool and school age service.

- (a) Nine written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified references were available from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 14 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available in respect of five adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as adults.

(4) Documentation was available to show that five of the adults who worked directly with children attending 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 equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (d) It could not be ascertained whether additional Police vetting was required for one adult, due to insufficient information available within the records reviewed.
- (3) Documentation reviewed showed that the procedures specified above under Regulation 9(2)(d) had not been carried out prior to the adult commencing employment in the service.
- (4) One adult employed to work directly with the children did not hold a qualification deemed appropriate to work in an early year's service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated the following:

(2)(d), (3) An up-to-date C.V was provided by the staff member which now states previous work placements. The recruitment process has been reviewed; management were briefed on recruitment and vetting policy; staff will not commence employment until human resource (HR) has issued authorisation to commence employment email after a thorough check has been completed. Management will conduct additional checks on staff files before a staff member commences and inform HR if additional documentation is required.

(4) Following a recent Regulatory Compliance Meeting, it was agreed that a clear roadmap has been established for all existing colleagues to achieve a minimum Level 5 qualification in childcare by summer 2027.

The registered provider stated that they are actively engaging in addressing this area of non-compliance at a national level to ensure alignment with both regulatory and legislative requirements.

For all newly appointed staff, they will ensure they hold at minimum, a Level 5 qualification in childcare to meet the regulatory requirements of Tulsa, while also ensuring they possess the appropriate qualifications to obtain registration with the teaching council, thereby meeting the qualification criteria set by the Department of Education.

Supporting documentation submitted

Record of staff members employment history

Copy of communications sent to management

Policy sign off record

Copy of staff file checklist

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2)(d) and (3) have been adequately addressed. The registered provider has attempted to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9(4) however this remains outstanding and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The number of adults present and working directly with the children on the day of the inspection was appropriate to support their needs.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection. There were 18 children present in the service, supervised by 5 adults. The person in charge provided relief cover to the care rooms when required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*

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(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of six children's files were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the required information was maintained for each child.

(3) (c) All records and information requested by the inspector were made available for review.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The person in charge described how information is shared with prospective parents or guardians as detailed below:

- The parent/guardian is invited into the setting for a viewing, during which information is provided about the service for example, the opening hours, type of program provided and the facilities available.
- When the booking is confirmed a parent handbook is provided along with a link to access the services policies and procedures.
- Information about the service is also available on the company website.

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.

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Compliance Information

The inspector observed appropriate and suitable care practices in the service as follows:

Staff described how they provide a play-based curriculum and children appeared to be confident and competent learners as they actively chose their preferred learning materials and moved freely around the care rooms. They were familiar with the children's individual needs and interacted with them in a respectful, warm and gentle manner. They dropped to the children's eye level when communicating with them, fostering positive interactions and supporting them to feel their voice was heard and responded to. A range of supports and resources were available to assist non-verbal children in communicating their needs and preferences. For example, staff in the Butterfly room utilised picture exchange communication system (PECS) books to support children's understanding of the daily routine and transitions. Children transitioned smoothly from one activity to the next and staff provided continuous verbal cues, alerting the children that the change was approaching.

Staff reported that children's lunches were provided daily by the parents. Drinking water was available in the care rooms and children were provided with water during mealtimes, following and during outdoor play. Children were encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their belongings, for example they retrieved their lunch bag from the fridge, tidied up following play, used the toilet independently and wash their hands, and hung up their coats following outdoor play. Staff were actively aware of children that required support in completing these tasks and responded promptly to their verbal and non-verbal cues. They sat with children during mealtimes and engaged them in conversation, supporting the development of their communication skills.

Staff intervened during moments of minor conflict supporting the children to find positive solutions. They reported that the service uses an online application to communicate key aspects of the children's day with parents. Additionally, they explained that parents had daily opportunities for informal discussions regarding their child's progress. During the inspection all of the children were observed spending time in the outdoor area and were appropriately dressed for the weather. Staff reported that each group had two designated outdoor play sessions and appeared to actively promote children's access to the outdoor environment.

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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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to ensure children could not exit unsupervised. Access was controlled through a keypad entry system for staff and parents/guardians, while visitors were required to be admitted by a staff member.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored on high shelves safely out of children's reach.
- The staircase was adequately lit, the floor covering was non-slip, and appropriate handrails were in place.
- Staff were observed monitoring the contents of children's lunch boxes to ensure the fruit provided was cut to an appropriate and safe size.

Infection Control:

- Pedal-operated bins were available throughout the service to support the safe disposal of waste.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- The care rooms were visibly clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were displayed in each room outlining cleaning tasks.

Administration of Medication:

- A care plan was available for a child with a serious medical condition. Staff demonstrated awareness of the child's individual care needs and were knowledgeable regarding the procedures to be followed in the event of a medical emergency.
- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take to ensure prescribed medication is given safely if needed, including obtaining written parental/guardian consent.
- Administration of medication records were available for use if required.

Fire Safety:

- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.
- Fire exits were observed to be unobstructed, clearly identified and easily opened from the inside during the inspection.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Two trailing cables were observed in the sensory room. Trailing cables from a light and a charger were observed to be at child level. It is acknowledged that there were no child present in the care room when the issue was identified. Trailing cables can compromise children's safety and increase the risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- Appropriate handwashing practices were not consistently implemented in the ECCE room. Children's hands were not washed when they returned to the care room following outdoor play, subsequently they were observed handling and drinking from their water bottles increasing the risk of the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Signage was added to the sensory room to remind colleagues to keep cables out of reach from children. An order was placed for a wireless disco ball and wireless sensory light. Staff were briefed on the risk management policy. The risk management policy was discussed at the staff meeting.

Infection Control:

- Staff were briefed on the infection control and handwashing policies at a staff meeting and signage has been put in place to remind staff about handwashing following outdoor play.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph of signage

Copy of invoice for wireless materials

Copy of staff meeting agenda

Infection Control:

Photograph of signage

Copy of staff meeting agenda

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.