TUSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

EARLY YEARS INSPECTORATE

Quality and Regulatory Framework

Pre-School Service in a Drop-In Centre



Pre-School Service: The legal definition of a pre-school is set out in 1991 Child Care Act Section VII.

This states that a Pre-School Service is 'any pre-school, play group, day nursery, creche, day-care or other similar service which caters for pre-school children.'

Based on the above legal definition, the Early Years Inspectorate's understanding of a Pre-School Service is 'an early childhood care and education service catering for children aged 0-6 years who are not attending school. A pre-school can be delivered as a sessional service up to 3.5 hrs a day, or be a part-time day care service where children attend for up to 5 hrs, or be a full day-care where they attend for longer. A pre-school can also be based in a drop-in centre, an over-night service or operate as a temporary service. They may be more commonly known as playschool, naíonra, or creche. Childminders are not considered a pre-school.

Pre-School Child: The Act defines a pre-school child as a child who is under six years, and who is not yet attending a recognised school.

This Quality and Regulatory Framework document applies to registered pre-school service types as follows:

A Pre-School Service in a Drop-in Centre: Offers day care which is only to be used now and again on a casual basis, and for not more than 2 hours while the parent or guardian is availing of a service or attending an event (for example going shopping).

Please see the companion Quality and Regulatory Framework documents for Full and Part-Time and Sessional Early Years Services.

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 defines the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. The Act and Regulations also give Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate the authority to assess compliance with the regulations which promotes the care, safety and wellbeing of early years children attending services.

For ease of reading, the Quality and Regulatory Framework is referred to simply as 'the Framework' or 'the QRF' throughout this document.

This Framework is accompanied by supporting materials, resources and documentation. These are available on the Early Years Inspectorate's website and are linked throughout this document.

Author's note

This Framework document is Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate's interpretation of the requirements for compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. These requirements are based on evidence drawn from national and international sources and peer-reviewed literature on best practice in inspection and Early Years provision.

The document, originally published in 2018 and revised in 2026, sets out in a clear way the requirements for statutory compliance with regulations for registered providers of Early Years Services, stakeholders and parents/guardians.

Record of changes to Quality and Regulatory Framework Version 2.0

Page	Description of change V1 to V2
Multiple	Update to information on First Aid
Multiple	Update to information on Garda and Police Vetting
83	Definition of Relevant Work added
i	Updated definition of pre-school child
ii/v	Author's note and foreword updated
vi	New layout of sections.
2	Abbreviations table updated
Multiple	Updated internal and external Links
5	Infographic updated/updated wording on stakeholders
Section 2	Previous policy information removed. Link inserted to each policy guidance note.
Multiple	Added 'appropriately qualified' to adults in respect of adult:child ratio
Multiple	Vetting information has been updated- links updated.
10	Information on Garda and International Police vetting updated
14	Clarification that staff recorded off on a break are not considered available to children
Multiple	Wording adjustment for 'immunisations' through document following advice from HSE.
27	Updated infectious disease legislation information
28	Added HSA to list of agencies that may need to be notified
Multiple	Link to EYI guidance on outdoor services inserted as required
52	Updated information on a care plan
Multiple	Link to updated DCDE Nutrition Standards inserted
Multiple	Link to EYI regulatory notices inserted.
44/61	Clarification that CE/BS/EN standards are 'as applicable'
46	Reference to bouncy castles prohibited/definition of bouncy castle added
64/65	Added link to EYI Guidance on ventilation, hygiene for mouthed toys
66	Added clarification on pedal bins
68	Updated text re: gloves and aprons in nappy changing
44/75	Blind cord information condensed
Multiple	Safeguarding information updated
79/80	Population immunity/immunisation sections updated
82/83	Definition of a premises updated/QQI section updated/definition of student updated

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Foreword

As the National Service Director for the Early Years Inspectorate, I am delighted to introduce this updated version of the Quality and Regulatory Framework. The first version of the Framework was published in 2018, and we committed to updating the document as required. Around that time, significant and transformative regulatory changes had been introduced that affected the sector and the inspectorate alike. The Early Years Inspectorate developed a programme of initiatives to support the sector with the implementation of the regulations. As in 2018, our focus remains on supporting the sector with the significant emphasis in the Child Care Act (1991) Early Years Services Regulations (2016) on the governance of services and to ensuring that children continue to be safe, receive appropriate care and have positive experiences in quality services.

The publication of the Quality and Regulatory Framework in 2018 was a groundbreaking development that set out in a clear way how the Early Years Inspectorate would assess services for compliance with the regulations. It aimed to provide information and clarification for providers and stakeholders on the requirements for compliance with regulation and to serve as a resource to improve the quality and safety in the services we inspect and regulate.

The updated Quality and Regulatory Framework aims to continue in the same spirit. The review and revision process showed us that the Framework has stood the test of time in most respects, however as with any revision, some areas were identified as requiring an update. Therefore, this version includes information and updates that have happened in the years since 2018. It signposts the reader to information available on the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate website, including guidance documents, webinars, regulatory notices and other information sources across several practice areas including safe sleep, outdoor provision, vetting processes and so on.

Probably the most significant update relates to the way information on developing and reviewing policies, procedures and statements is shared with our stakeholders. In 2018, we issued detailed and comprehensive guidance and sample templates on policies, procedures and statements within the body of the Quality and Regulatory Framework. As we have now published a suite of resources for the sector on the development of policies, procedures and statements, the detailed policy templates are no longer within the body of document, but we have signposted to the reader as to where they can access the information and supports they need when developing or reviewing policies, procedures and statements.

We hope that the Quality and Regulatory Framework continues to be a supportive resource for the sector, parents and guardians and all our stakeholders. As we move into the future, and meet the challenges and opportunities that are coming, we will continue to engage with the sector in a collaborative and constructive way, as we know that by working together, we can impact positively on children's early experiences and on their outcomes. Thank you all for your continued engagement with the Inspectorate, and we look forward to continued interaction and engagement with the sector, parents/guardians, children in services, and all our stakeholders.



Fiona McDonnell
National Service Director Children's Services Regulation Quality and Regulation Directorate

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National Service Director
Children's Services Regulation

Structure of the Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF)

The Framework is constructed in three sections. The following information boxes describe what each section contains.

Section 1

This section contains:

Abbreviations and acronyms – a list of the abbreviated terms used throughout the Framework.

Introduction – information on who we are, the role of regulatory inspection, the aim and development of the Framework, and how inspections are conducted.

Overview of Early Years Inspectorate – a representation in pictures and words of the Early Years Inspectorate's relationships with stakeholders.

Inspection in Context of Other Legislation – information on the role of the Inspectorate in respect of other legislation which does not come under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Sections 2 to 5

These sections contain:

Information about the regulations grouped under four areas:

1. Governance.
2. Health Welfare and Development of the Child.
3. Safety.
4. Premises and Facilities.

Across these four areas, there are numbered points, many of which are divided into subcategories, which will help you in achieving compliance.

The information explains the following elements of each regulation:

» The **purpose** of each regulation – a description of the extent and purpose of the regulation.

» The **core requirements for compliance** for each regulation – what the service must demonstrate to comply with the regulation. If the regulation is lengthy, it is divided into points to ensure that all requirements are covered.

Section 6

This section contains:

Appendix 1: Service Record Retention Timeframe – the period of time detailed in the regulations for which each record is kept.

Appendix 2: Inspection in Context of Other Legislation – other legislation where the Inspectorate may identify a concern not within the remit of the 2016 Regulations.

Appendix 3: Development of the QRF – an overview of the development of the Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Appendix 4: Explanatory Notes – notes to explain some words, terms and phrases used within the Framework. These notes are placed in alphabetical order.

Before you begin

Please note that we have tried to make the information in this document clear and easy to read. To do this, we have used several reader-friendly tools to help guide you through the Framework.

Section 1 opens with a **list of abbreviations and acronyms** that are used in the early years sector in general and the statutory regulations in particular. You might find it useful to refer to this list as you read through the Framework.

Sections 2 to 5 deal with the **Regulations** and describe the purpose of each regulation and the elements required for compliance. Throughout these sections, **examples** are offered to help clarify the compliance requirements. The examples appear in blue shading underneath the point they relate to. Please remember that the examples given aim to simply show or suggest how compliance could be met. It does not mean that the example given is the only way to achieve compliance. The examples might, though, help to explain the regulation and give you some ideas of your own about how you can make your service compliant.

Section 6 includes Appendix 4: **Explanatory Notes**. There are many words, phrases and terms that have a particular meaning within the context of the statutory regulatory requirements in the Early Years Sector. Here, we define the terms in alphabetical order, and, in some instances, we give additional information about the term as well as its definition.

Throughout the Framework, some words or phrases are underlined and in blue text. The blue text is a hyperlink. If you are reading on screen, click on a hyperlink to bring you to further information on the topic in question – for example, it might link to the term in the Explanatory Notes, as outlined above. Or it might bring you to a website if your device has access to the internet.

Also, you will notice the word '**See**…' at the end of some descriptions of regulations. When this is used, it will be followed by one or more regulation reference numbers or appendix numbers – for example, 'See Regulation 10' or 'See Appendix 2'. This is inviting you to compare the regulation or appendix you are reading with other regulations or appendices, so that you can see how they are linked.

Throughout the Framework, there are also some **footnotes**. These are notes at the bottom of the page that might suggest where you can find more information on a particular topic, or they might simply help to explain the meaning of a word or phrase.

If you would like to **search** for a particular word or topic, you can do this using the search or find box. Hold down the 'Ctrl' button and then click the 'F' key. Or you can go to your toolbar and click on 'Edit' and select the 'Find' option from the drop-down menu.

We hope you find these tools useful as you read through the Framework.

Section 1

This section contains:

Abbreviations and acronyms: a list of the abbreviated terms used throughout the Framework.

Introduction: information on who we are, the role of regulatory inspection, the aim and development of the Framework, and how inspections are conducted.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms used in this document are explained here. You will find additional abbreviations and acronyms in the Acronyms Index on the Early Years Hive.

ACRO	ACRO Criminal Records Office, UK	**NCCA**	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
AIM	Access and Inclusion Model	**NDA**	National Disability Authority
CCC	Child Care Committee	**NSAI**	National Standards Authority of Ireland
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television	**NCS**	National Childcare Scheme
CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education	**OECD**	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCPC	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	**PHECC**	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability and Equality	**QQI**	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
DEY	Department of Education and Youth	**QRF**	Quality and Regulatory Framework
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme	**UNCRC**	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECI	Early Childhood Ireland		
EYI	Early Years Inspectorate		
FOI	Freedom of Information		
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations		
GNVB	Garda National Vetting Bureau		
HPSC	Health Protection Surveillance Centre		
HSA	Health and Safety Authority		
HSE	Health Service Executive		
ICPC	International Child Protection Certificate		
INCO	Inclusion Coordinator		
LINC	Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years		

Introduction

Who we are

The Child and Family Agency (Tusla) is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. The work of Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is guided by the vision, mission, and values of Tusla as set out in Tusla's current Corporate Plan.

In its unique role as the independent statutory regulator of children's services, the Early Years Inspectorate undertakes inspection of registered services that are listed on the Pre-School Services Register. The Inspectorate promotes quality, safety and the appropriate care of children. The Early Years Inspectorate (EYI) within Tusla operates under Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991.

Many benefits of regulation in Early Years Services have been identified. These include:

- Safeguarding children from harm,
- Ensuring the regulatory standards are met,
- Supporting the translation of quality standards into practice,
- Providing parents/guardians and the public with assurances that services are of a consistent quality, and
- Setting benchmarks so that service providers can develop, improve and maintain services for children.

Guiding principles

The Early Years Inspectorate demonstrates Tusla's core values of trust, respect, empathy, working together and integrity. Its work is informed by national and international best practice, whilst also considering the unique elements of the Irish context.

The following principles and values underpin the Inspectorate's work:

- Respect for the professionalism, knowledge and expertise of those working in the early years sector,
- Respect for the various philosophical perspectives and pedagogical approaches in early years provision in Ireland,
- Priority of the safety, health, welfare, development and care of the child in early years' provision, in line with the regulations.
- Commitment to providing a world-class inspection service, which will impact positively on children's experiences in Early Years Services, and
- Conducting a rigorous inspection process that is fair, reasonable, transparent, accountable, impartial and proportionate at all times, and keeps children's wellbeing at the heart of the inspection.

Valuing the care and education of the child

The Early Years Inspectorate acknowledges that:

- Every child is unique and has inalienable rights as set out in the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Early childhood is a significant and distinct period in life that must be valued, respected, nurtured and supported
- The child's individuality, strengths, needs and rights are central to providing quality early childhood education and care
- Children have the right to be listened to and appropriately responded to
- Children's health, wellbeing, safety, care and education must be protected and promoted at all times in all early childhood environments
- Positive relationships, which are secure, responsive and respectful and which provide consistency and continuity over time, are the cornerstone of the child's wellbeing, and
- Play is the central means to support young children's learning, creativity and development.

Aim of the QRF

The aim of the Framework is to support providers of registered Early Years Services to comply with the 2016 Regulations. This Framework sets out the Early Years Inspectorate's interpretation of these regulations in a transparent way. It presents the scope of how the Inspectorate will assess services for compliance with these regulations which, in turn, will promote the quality and safety of services provided to children. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a more detailed history of the development of the QRF.

Purpose of regulatory inspection

Regulatory inspection under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 aims to determine the extent to which:

- The service is well governed,
- The health, welfare and development of each child is supported,
- Children are safe in the service,
- The premises are safe, suitable and appropriate for the care and education of children.

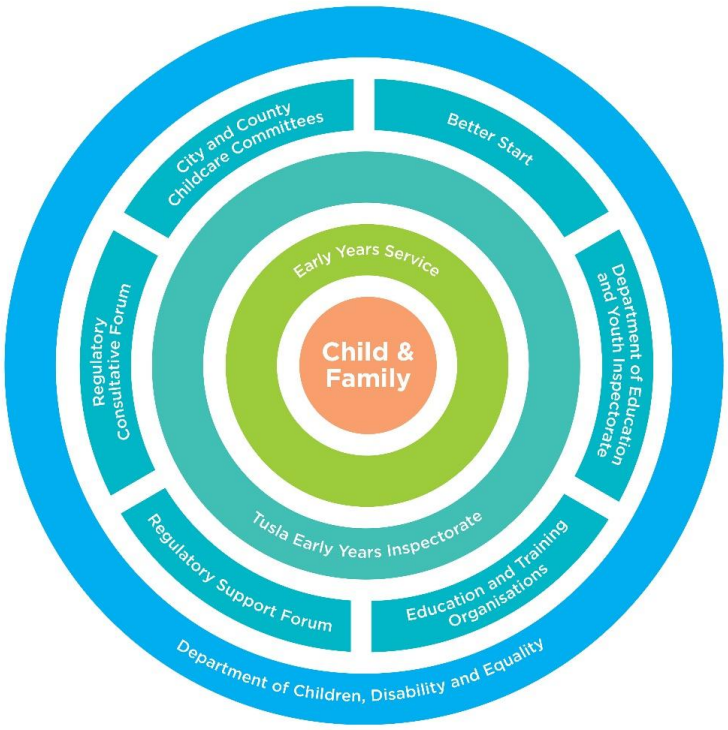
Please refer to Tusla's guidance and resources for more information on regulatory inspections.

Inspection in the context of other legislation

Each registered provider must ensure that the service complies with the legislative requirements of other relevant statutory agencies. During inspection, the Early Years Inspector may identify concerns related to other legislation that is not within the remit of the 2016 Regulations, and which is having, or may have, a negative impact on the health, welfare and/or safety of a child attending your service. If this happens, the Inspector can request the service to provide relevant information in respect of identified risk(s).[1] If Tusla is not satisfied with the information provided, it can refer the matter to the relevant statutory agency. See Appendix 2 for areas of legislation where concerns could be identified and referrals made. In all instances, the referral and the reason for the referral is made known in advance to the registered provider.

[1]Regulation 33(1), Furnishing of information to the Agency (Tusla), of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, requires that a registered provider provides the Agency with any information it may reasonably require to enforce and execute the 2016 Regulations.

Overview of Tusla Early Years Inspectorate: Key Relationships



The infographic above provides an overview of the Early Years Inspectorate and key relationships that are needed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and their families who use Early Years Services.

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate is conscious of all our partners, and as the statutory regulator we are mindful to remain impartial and independent in our regulatory judgements. We work in partnership with the Early Years Sector to promote compliance with the Regulations. We also work with stakeholder groups and forums to promote understanding and encourage quality and service improvement within the sector.

Child and Family: Promoting the quality, safety and appropriate care of each child and their family who use Early Years Services, is at the centre of the purpose of Tusla's Inspectorate.

Early Years Service: Working in partnership with families, promoting, supporting and enabling each child to have a positive experience in the early years setting.

Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate: The statutory regulator with responsibility to register and inspect Early Years Services in line with regulatory requirements.

Regulatory Consultative Forum: Tusla's Early Years Regulatory Consultation forum where early years representatives and stakeholders contribute to, and support the work of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Regulatory Support Forum: A joint initiative of the DCDE and the Early Years Inspectorate of Tusla. The aim of the forum is to provide an opportunity to update support organisations on the processes within the Inspectorate, so as to enable these organisations to provide support, advice and training to those working in the Early Years Sector.

Education and Training Organisations: Representatives of higher and further education and training organisations are informed of and share relevant regulatory information.

Better Start National Early Years- Quality Development: A national initiative to promote and enhance inclusive high-quality Early Learning and Care for children from birth to 6 years of age. It provides an Early Years Specialist team to work directly in a mentoring and coaching capacity to support quality and inclusive practice in settings. Better Start also coordinate the national programme of continuous professional development available through http://www.nurturingskills.ie

City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs): Local support organisations working directly with parents, early learning and care and school-age childcare providers and childminders to support inclusive high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare. CCCs provide information, training, and local development supports including regulatory support.

Department of Education and Youth Inspectorate: The Dept of Education and Youth Inspectorate (DEY) work to improve the quality of learning for children and young people in Irish schools, centres for education, early years settings providing State funded early childhood care and education for children until they enrol in primary school, and other learning settings. Inspections are designed to evaluate key aspects of education provision in the educational setting inspected and to promote improvement in that setting. The Inspectorate is also responsible for the provision of advice to the education system, the Minister and policy makers.

Department of Children, Disability and Equality: The Department's mission is to fund and deliver services supported by policy and legislation that realise people's rights, promote equality, celebrate diversity and that maximise opportunity to participate in society, particularly by children, disabled people and those experiencing inequalities

Section 2

Governance

The regulations that apply to this area are:

- **Regulation 9:** Management and Recruitment.
- **Regulation 10**: Policies, Procedures etc of a Pre-School Service.
- **Regulation 11:** Staffing Levels.
- **Regulation 13:** Pre-School Service in a Drop-In Centre
- **Regulation 14:** Review of Pre-School Service.
- **Regulation 15:** Record of Pre-School Child.
- **Regulation 16:** Record in Relation to Pre-School Service.
- **Regulation 17:** Information for Parents.
- **Regulation 31:** Notification of Incidents.
- **Regulation 32:** Complaints.

Regulation 9: Management and Recruitment

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that an effective management structure is in place, and appropriate people are recruited, to ensure the quality and safety of the care provided to the children attending the service. You must ensure that staff are competent to perform their roles by providing appropriate training, supervision and performance evaluation.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Governance

» The service has clearly defined governance arrangements and structures that:
- set out lines of authority and accountability,[2]
- specify roles and responsibilities,
- are appropriate to the size, ethos, purpose and function of the service, and
- are documented and available.

2. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider and each person working in the service has a clear understanding of their own role and range of responsibilities to ensure the quality and safety of care provided to the children attending the service.

» The registered provider has established, and maintains, an appropriate administrative process, ensuring the effective operation of the service.

3. Management

» There is a designated person in charge,

» There is at least one named person who can deputise if required,

» The designated person in charge or the named person to deputise, is on the premises at all times while the service is in operation,

» The person in charge on a day-to-day basis is documented,

Example: this could be an entry in the staff roster.

» There is at least 1 alternative person in charge in the absence of both the designated person and the deputy,

» There is a person in charge and at least 1 deputy person in charge at each place, where the service operates in more than one premises.

[2] Being responsible for making decisions and justifying actions.

4. Recruitment

Recruitment Policy

» There is a Recruitment Policy in place,

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your recruitment policy,

» There is evidence of the recruitment policy being implemented,

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the recruitment policy,

» Relevant staff have received training on the recruitment policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

5. Vetting

» Vetting is undertaken and is completed before a person who is/will be undertaking Relevant Work is appointed, assigned or allowed access to, or contact with, a child attending the service.

» Each employee, unpaid worker and contractor who is engaged in Relevant Work is vetted.

» Where relevant, company directors or board members who have regular access to children in the service must be vetted at Registration and Re-Registration. This is in accordance with Regulation 6. Such vetting is now processed by Tusla or another provider as relevant to the service- (example Family Resource Centre vetting provider if relevant to the service).

» Vetting documentation is available in English/Irish. If an original document is not in English/Irish, it must be translated by a certified translator and the translation kept with the original document. Evidence of the source of translation should be available to the Early Years Inspectorate.

» Due diligence in respect of ensuring that a person is suitable for a role that involves Relevant Work includes verifying the person's identity, their experience and qualifications, and considering references and Garda Vetting disclosures (and Police clearance where appropriate). There is a written record of each person's qualifications and work history (example CV, application form) on file in the service.

» A risk assessment may be required in some situations as set out in the Recruitment Policy of the service and kept on file in line with the service's responsibilities under the GDPR, and open to inspection if required.

References:

» At least two written references are required. These should be from previous employers, with one from the most recent employer.

» References can be obtained from a reputable source if a person has no previous employers.

» A reference should be obtained from the relevant employer where the person was previously employed in an early years role.

» A reference from the registered provider is sufficient, where the person has been employed in the service for five years or more and does not have a previous employer.

» All references must:
  - be from a reputable source,
  - be in writing (hard/soft copies are both acceptable),
  - be dated and signed by the referee, giving details of the referee's position,
  - contain the address, phone number, logo or headed paper of the referee, and the organisation's stamp where applicable.

Example: a letter with a college stamp.

  - be validated by the employer or relevant organisation,[3]
  - be kept (along with any other validations) in each individual's staff file.

See **Regulation 16.**

Garda Vetting/Police Clearance:

» Garda Vetting disclosure for every person undertaking Relevant Work is obtained from the National Vetting Bureau in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

» Garda Vetting for registered providers, and members of boards of management is processed through Tusla or another Relevant Organisation,

» Garda Vetting applications for staff are processed through a relevant organisation such as Early Childhood Ireland,

» Garda Vetting processes are conducted in accordance with Tusla's Regulatory Notices on Garda Vetting,

» Garda Vetting is required for a person undertaking Relevant Work aged 18 years and over.

» Please refer to Tusla's guidance document on vetting requirements for students on placement - including students under the age of 18 years.

» Garda Vetting for each person has been undertaken and is dated within the last 3 years, including Garda Re-Vetting in line with Tusla's Regulatory Notice on Renewal of Garda Vetting.

» Further information on vetting for the early years sector can be found on the government website; : Garda Vetting for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Aged Childcare (SAC) sector,

» International police clearance, in so far as is practicable, is obtained for people who have lived in a state or country outside of the island of Ireland for more than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.

» The Early Years Inspectorate expects that Police Vetting has been obtained (where required) for persons in the service with access to children. There are a very small number of countries where Police Vetting is currently unobtainable, and this will be kept under review by the Inspectorate. However, most countries have systems in place to issue Police Vetting documentation. Further information on International Police Vetting can be found in Tusla's Vetting of Staff in Early Years Services: Obtaining Vetting for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers.

» Only in very exceptional circumstances, and when accompanied by evidence that the person has exhausted all possible routes to obtaining vetting from a specific country, will the absence of Police Vetting be considered acceptable by the Early Years Inspectorate.

[3] Validation of references for sole operators is undertaken by Tusla Early Years Inspectorate

» Police Vetting documentation not in English/Irish must be translated by a certified translator and the translation held on file in the service.

» Police clearance where required is undertaken by the individual and given to the employer.

6. Qualifications

Each employee and a registered provider working directly with children holds one of the following:

» A minimum of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. Please refer to the Regulatory Notice on Qualifications in Pre-school Services for further information.

» The qualification requirement or relevant specialist training for a person employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), detailed in an exemption letter from Pobal.

7. Staff supervision

Staff Supervision Policy

» There is a Staff Supervision Policy in place,

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your staff supervision policy,

» There is evidence of the staff supervision policy being implemented,

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the staff supervision policy,

» Relevant staff have received training on the staff supervision policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

8. Information exchange

» An effective internal communications system is evident within the service which enables the flow of information between staff and management.

Examples: one-to-one discussions, staff meetings, staff feedback methods and staff supervision meetings.

9. Staff Training

Staff Training Policy

» There is a Staff Training Policy in place,

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your staff training policy,

» There is evidence of the staff training policy being implemented,

» Relevant staff know the training requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the staff training policy,

» Relevant staff have received training on the staff training policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

Regulation 10: Policies, Procedures etc., of Pre-School Service

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must develop, approve, distribute and review policies, procedures and statements in a consistent way. Policies and procedures will standardise your service's approach to implementing best practice and ensuring compliance with the regulations.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Management and relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to developing, approving, distributing and reviewing the service's policies, procedures and statements.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Policies, procedures and statements

» A process is in place to develop and approve a policy and procedure, or statement.

» Relevant staff have access to an up-to-date version of each of the policies, procedures and statements. They have these in hard copy or electronically.

» Approved policies, procedures and statements are reflected in the services' practices.

Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance notes for support when developing and reviewing your policies, procedures and statements.

» The following policies as detailed within Schedule 5 of the Child Care Act (1991) Early Years Services Regulations (2016) are in place:

- Statement of Purpose and Function
- Complaints
- Administration of Medication
- Infection Control
- Managing Behaviour
- Safe Sleep
- Fire Safety
- Inclusion
- Accidents and Incidents
- Authorisation to Collect Children
- Healthy Eating
- Staff Absences
- Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices

- Recruitment
- Risk Management
- Settling-in
- Staff Training
- Staff Supervision (does not apply to sole operator)

3. Communication of policies, procedures and statements

» Policies, procedures and statements, including any updates, are communicated and available to parents/guardians.

» Parents/guardians confirm that they have read and accepted the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

Examples: they could sign a declaration form, or complete a declaration online, or sign a parent's contract.

See **Regulations 14, 16 and 23.**

Regulation 11: Staffing Levels

Purpose

Your service must ensure that an adequate number of staff are available at all times during the provision of services to meet the needs of the children attending. At all times, the number of staff within the service is appropriate to the needs of children, the type of service and the care provided.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Management and relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to maintaining the minimum adult: child ratios at all times.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Staffing

» There are a sufficient number of suitable employees in the service with the necessary experience and competencies (qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities) to:

- meet the needs of all children at all times
- ensure adequate supervision at all times, including while children are sleeping or resting and during staff breaks. Staff on their breaks are not considered 'available' to work directly with the children.
- reflect the size, layout and purpose of the service.

» The adult: child ratio is followed at all times, and there are sufficient number of qualified staff in the service working directly with the children.

See **Regulations 9, 27 and 29.**

3. Staff roster

» The service displays the current staff roster and keeps a record of all rosters within the service.

» The staff roster:

- gives details of the staff on duty while the service is in operation (including at least 1 person trained in First Aid)
- gives details of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge in the absence of the person in charge
- sets out the adult:child ratio on a daily basis for each area of the service
- gives details of any person not included in the adult:child ratio
- records the actual start, finish and break times of each person in attendance every day
- demonstrates that there is sufficient cover for early arrivals, late collections, breaks, holidays, sick leave, school runs, kitchen duty, outings and any other situation where additional staff may be needed, and,
- is documented for a weekly or monthly period.

4. Adult:child ratios

» Only appropriately qualified staff can be counted in the adult:child ratios. Staff directly working with children in a supernumerary capacity should also be qualified.

This is not applicable to students or people on employment schemes.

» The child ratios are in line with the following:

Adult: child ratio per service type
Drop-in Service » For children aged 0 - 6 years, the adult: child ratio is 1:4 » There are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times. » If more than 15 children are attending, a designated employee or unpaid worker is responsible for checking the children in and out. This person is not included in the adult: child ratio. » If a person in charge is included in the adult: child ratio, their managerial duties do not detract from direct childcare.

See **Regulation 9.**

5. Staff planning

Policy on Staff Absences

» The Staff Absences Policy is in place.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your staff absences policy.

» There is evidence of the policy on staff absences being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on staff absences.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on staff absences.

See **Regulation 10.**

Regulation 13: Pre-School Services in Drop-In Centres

Purpose

The number of children attending the service at any one time and the length of stay by children in the service are limited.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider has a clear understanding of the number of children that can attend a Drop-In Centre at any one time, and the length of time a child can attend these services as follows:

- No more than 24 children attend at any given time.
- No child attends for longer than 2 hours at a time

Regulation 14: Review of Pre-School Service

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must ensure that the quality and safety of the care and service provided to children is reviewed at least once a year in line with the regulations. The review is a formal assessment of the service, including its policies, procedures and statements, with the intention of making changes if necessary.

A review of practice helps you to make informed judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the service, with a view to improving the quality of care and education of the children. You must keep a record of the review for three years after it was done.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The person responsible for carrying out the review has a clear understanding that their function is to ensure the quality and safety of care provided to the children attending the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Annual review

» The annual review of the service examines the quality and safety of care provided, and includes a review of all policies, procedures, statements.

See **Regulation 10.**

3. Plan of review

» A plan of the areas and policies to be reviewed is developed and recorded, with the approval of the registered provider.

» Relevant staff are informed of the planned review.

» The plan details the following:

- The name of the person or people who will carry out the review,

This could be, for example the registered provider, or a person nominated by them,

- The date of the review, and a timeline for completion,
- The frequency of the review – if a process is identified as high risk, then the review is prioritised and carried out more frequently than once a year,
- The area of service being reviewed, to ensure ongoing quality and safety of care in line with the service's statements, policies and procedures,
- Any other reviews necessary to ensure the quality and safety of the care provided are undertaken.

Examples: inspection reports, corrective and preventive actions, Health and Safety Authority reports, Fire Officer reports.

4. Carrying out the review

The reviewer must:

» Consult with relevant staff involved in the area being reviewed.

» Determine if relevant staff:

- have access to current policies
- have received updated training on the policies, procedures and statements of the service
- have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities relevant to their position
- know the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

» Keep a written record of the review.

» Consider:

- any feedback and suggested amendments from the staff consultation (not applicable to sole operator),
- any quality improvement activities completed or ongoing in the area being reviewed,
- any trends in the area being reviewed,

Examples: repeated incident reports, repeated complaints.

» Determine if the policies, procedures and statements of the service are being implemented.

Reviewing policies, procedures, statements and practice to determine:

5. The service is being well governed.

The following must be considered (May not all apply to a sole operator):

» Statement of purpose and function.

» Safety statement.

» Management and recruitment.

» Complaint reporting and management.

» Reporting of incidents.

» Staff training.

» Supervision of staff.

» Staffing levels.

» Record of attendance.

» Authorisation and collection of children.

» Staff absences.

» Record management – records of children and service records.

» Information for parents and guardians.

» The service has a copy of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

6. The health, welfare and development of each child attending is being supported:

The following must be considered:

» Children's care needs are being met.

» Relationships are being supported.

» Children's learning and development are being supported.

» Positive emotional and behavioural supports and practices are in place.

» The environment supports children's wellbeing.

» Use of the internet and photographic and recording devices is in line with best practice (this may include the use of CCTV where appropriate).

» Children are supported and helped to settle in.

» Healthy eating is supported.

» All children are welcomed.

7. Children are safe in the service:

The following must be considered:

» Supervision of children.

» Infection control (including outbreaks).

» Accidents and injuries.

» Administration of medication.

» Safe sleep.

» First aid.

» Risk management.

» Fire safety.

» Insurance.

8. The premises are safe, suitable and appropriate for the care and education of the children.

» The following must be considered:

- space requirements,
- equipment and materials, and
- the premises (including access to the service, cleaning, lighting, heating, maintenance, and so on).

9. Reporting and closing out reviews.

» Staff are told about the findings of the review.

» Any issues to be addressed or areas for improvement are identified and recorded.

Examples: an amendment to a policy, a change in practice.

» Corrective and preventive actions are put in place to remedy the issues identified.

» Staff view the review findings and any remedial actions as an opportunity to learn and improve.

» Reviews are closed when any issues identified are corrected.

10. Retention of records

» The provider keeps a record of the review in the service for three years from the date on which the review was completed.

See **Appendix 1** Service Record Retention Timeframe.

Regulation 15: Record of Pre-School Child

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must develop, maintain, store and retain records about children attending the service. The records must contain appropriate information to document and support the care provided by the service to each child. The service controls and protects the information it holds about children.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider and relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in managing children's records under the following legislation:
  - Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

See **Regulations 9 and 10**.

2. Children's records.

» The records of children contain the following:
  - The child's name and date of birth,
  - The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service,
  - Authorisation for collecting the child. This includes:
    – The name(s), address(es) and contact number(s) of the person(s) authorised to collect the child.
  - Written authorisation from the parent or guardian allowing the child to be released by the service into the care of the authorised person.
  - Photo identification or an agreed password or code for any person not known to the service who has permission to collect the child as set out in the Authorisation to Collect Policy.
  - Proof that the authorised person is aged 16 or over, as appropriate.

» Details are recorded of any illness, allergy or additional need(s) the child has, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.

» Entries in the children's records are factual, consistent, accurate and reviewed.

» The record has been updated if the child's information changes.

See **Regulation 19.**

3. Availability of records

» There is a record for each child attending the service.

» Parents and guardians are told that the service keeps records in relation to their child.

» Records about individual children are accessible to the child's parent or guardian, except where the service has been advised in writing that this would place the child's welfare at risk.

» Requests by third parties for information are discussed with parents and guardians, and information is only shared if they give their consent. (An exception to this is when there is a requirement to report concerns about the welfare or safety of the child – for example, in relation to child safeguarding)

See **Regulation 19.**

4. Access to children's records and record confidentiality

» Children's records are kept confidential.

» Children's personal information is not discussed outside of the service.

» The records are available for inspection to:

- parents and guardians, but only for their own child's record.
- an employee who is authorised by the registered provider; and
- an authorised person such as a Tusla Early Years Inspector.

5. Electronic records

» If children's records are held electronically, they are password protected.

» Electronic records can be appropriately accessed, retrieved and/or reproduced when needed.

6. Retention of children's records

» The original records, and any additions such as any written requests and all signed forms, are **kept** by the service.

» The relevant children's records are kept for 2 years from the date a child **starts** at the service.

See **Regulation 16.**

See **Appendix 1**: Service Record Retention Timeframe.

Regulation 16: Record in Relation to Pre-School Service

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must develop, maintain, store and keep relevant service records. Personal information kept by the service must be appropriately controlled and protected.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider and relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in managing the service's records under the following legislation:
  - Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

» The people within the service with responsibility for records have access to the information they need to carry out their duties and make reasonable and informed decisions.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Information in relation to the service

» A record in writing of the following information is available in the service:
  - The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and the other employees, unpaid workers and contractors.
  - Details of the type of service being provided, and the age profile of children that the service is registered to provide services to.
  - Details of the adult:child ratio in the service.
  - The type of care or programme provided in the service.
  - The facilities available within the service, and outdoors.
  - The opening hours and fees.

» The policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain are in line with Regulation 10.

» The service's record of attendance by children on a daily basis includes the time of arrival to, and departure from, the service.

» Details of daily staff rosters are kept.

» Details are recorded of any medication given to a child attending the service with signed parental or guardian consent.

» Details are recorded of any accident, injury or incident involving a child attending the service.

See **Regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 19 and 31.**

3. Service record retention

» All documents and records about references and Garda and Police Vetting are kept for 5 years from the date each person started working in the service.

» The following children's records are kept for 2 years from the date a child attending the service:

- The record of attendance by children on a daily basis including the time of arrival to, and departure from, the service.
- Details of any medication given to a child attending the service with signed parental or guardian consent.
- Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a child attending the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

See **Appendix 1** Service Record Retention Timeframe.

Regulation 17: Information for Parents

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must provide all relevant information about the service, the type of care provided and the facilities available, to the parents and guardians of children proposing to attend the service. You must provide this information in a way they can understand.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Management and relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of information to parents and guardians of children attending and planning to attend the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Information provided to parents and guardians

» Parents and guardians are informed about any significant changes to policies and procedures, and this is documented.

» The following information is available to the parents and guardians of children proposing to attend the service:

- The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other staff member.
- Details of the type of service and the age profile of the children.
- Details of the adult:child ratio in the service.
- The type of care or programmes provided within the service and any additional needs or interests provided for.
- The facilities available.
- The opening hours and fees.
- All policies, procedures and statements relevant to the service that are required in line with Regulation 10.

See **Regulations 9, 10, 11, 16 and 19.**

3. Access to information

» All information provided to parents and guardians is available, easy to use and accessible.

Examples:

- **notice boards, charts, posters**
- **newsletters, booklets and leaflets**
- **texting, group chats and webpage**
- **one-to-one contact with parents/guardians**

4. Publicly displayed information in the service

» The following information is publicly displayed within the service for the parents and guardians of children attending and planning to attend the service, and other relevant parties:

- The registered provider's name.
- The service's Tusla Registration Certificate.
- A contact name and number for the service.
- Contact details for emergency medical assistance.
- The Child Safeguarding Statement,
- The process to be followed, evacuation routes and procedures if there is a fire or other emergency.

See **Regulations 9, 25 and 26.**

Regulation 31: Notification of Incidents

Purpose

If an accident, injury or incident occurs, you, as the service provider, must have policies and procedures in place to identify, document, address, review and communicate the associated information. The accident, injury or incident could relate to either children attending the service or to your staff. You must take the necessary actions to prevent any reoccurrence of accidents, injuries or incidents. You must promote a positive and open culture of reporting to parents and guardians, and you must give feedback to parents and guardians after your investigations.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Relevant Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the notification of incidents to the Early Years Inspectorate.

» Relevant staff have received training on how to notify the Early Years Inspectorate about incidents.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Managing notifying incidents to the Early Years Inspectorate

» There is a consistent and standardised approach to notifying the Early Years Inspectorate of accidents, injuries and incidents that occur within the service using the Notification of Incident Form.

» The registered provider notifies the Early Years Inspectorate within three working days of becoming aware of any notifiable event.

» All accidents, injuries and incidents notified to the Early Years Inspectorate are investigated, managed and reported in line with the service's risk management and accident, injury and incident policy and procedures.

» All reasonable measures are taken to prevent another accident, injury or incident occurring.

» The Inspectorate must be notified of the following incidents:

- The death of a child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital after they were transferred from the service.
- The diagnosis of an infectious disease in a child attending the service, or the diagnosis of an infectious disease in an employee, an unpaid worker, a contractor or any other person working in the service. (An infectious disease is defined in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 to 2024).
- An accident or incident that resulted in the service being closed for any length of time (for example an unplanned closure following unforeseen circumstances such as a burst pipe).
- A serious injury to a child while attending the service that needed immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner, in hospital or elsewhere.
- An incident of a child going missing while attending the service.

3. Reporting of incidents to external parties

» The registered provider knows which accidents or incidents need to be reported to parties other than the Early Years Inspectorate and ensures that all such reports are made.

Examples of reporting to other parties:

- **Tusla Social Work services – if there is a child safeguarding concern.**
- **Garda Síochána – if there is a danger to staff or children, or a criminal offence has been committed.**
- **Health and Safety Authority – if the incident is dangerous, or a staff member has been injured as a result.**
- **The service's insurance company – if appropriate.**

Regulation 32: Complaints

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must be open and responsive to people making complaints about the service. You must develop and implement a complaints management process that is consistent, fair, transparent and impartial.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» A consistent and unbiased approach is used to manage all complaints within the service.

» Complaints are investigated, managed and reported in line with the service's complaints policy and procedures.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Complaints

Complaints Policy

» The Complaints Policy is in place.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your complaints policy.

» There is evidence of the complaints policy being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the complaints policy.

» Relevant staff have received training on the complaints policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

3. Access to records

» The written record of a complaint is available on the premises for inspection by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Section 3

Health, Welfare and Development of the Child

The regulations that apply to this area are:

- **Regulation 19:** Health, Welfare and Development of Child.
- **Regulation 20:** Facilities for Rest and Play.
- **Regulation 22:** Food and Drink.

Regulation 19: Health, Welfare and Development of the Child

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure the health, welfare and development of all children attending the service. You achieve this through implementing an appropriate programme and care practices that support the learning, development and wellbeing of each child, taking their individual interests and needs into consideration.

Overview of Regulation 19

This regulation takes account of the health, welfare and development of the child across the service, with specific reference to how the:

» basic and individual care needs of all children are supported,
» relationships and interactions around all children are supported,
» service supports inclusion, diversity and children's transitions
» children's positive behaviour is supported,
» environment supports the learning, development and wellbeing of each child,
» service ensures the delivery of an effective programme and effective care practices, and
» service uses technology, including the internet, photographic and recording devices (as appropriate).

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to support children's health, wellbeing and development within the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Children's basic and individual care needs

Eating and drinking

» Healthy Eating is promoted within the service.
» Nutritious snacks and water or milk are available to children when needed.

Example: can be provided by parents or guardians, or the service.

» Enough time is allowed for bottle-feeding and eating.
» Infants younger than 12 months are held while bottle-feeding.
» The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used are suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.

Example: easy-grip forks and spoons, spill-proof cups.

» Children are not forced to eat or drink.

» The table and chairs are suitable to children's age and stage of development.

See **Regulation 22.**

Nappy changing and toileting

» The privacy and dignity of each child is respected at all times.

» The staff respond to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting.

» Staff respond to children's cues quickly.

» Nappy changing and toileting is a positive experience for children.

Examples:
- **Talking to the child and explaining in advance that their nappy will be changed.**
- **Giving the child one-to-one attention and responding to their communication cues – verbal and nonverbal.**

» Children have unrestricted access to the toilet, and do not have to wait to use the toilet.

» Children are allowed to take their time during toileting.

» Nappies are changed as necessary and in a timely manner.

» Staff use positive and appropriate language when supporting toileting and nappy changing.

» Setbacks and toileting accidents are treated in a sensitive and supportive way. Children are not made to feel embarrassed, ashamed or made to feel inadequate, or be punished about any aspect of using the toilet.

Personal care

» Children are encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.

Examples: brushing their teeth, wiping their nose, putting on clothes and shoes.

» Staff guide and support children who need more help.

» The service promotes an awareness of healthy personal care habits in children.

Examples: encouraging hand washing, use of clean tissues.

» Picture and word reminders and instructions are displayed and used with the children to support personal care.

» Children are encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

Examples:
- **showing how to wash hands properly, and supervising children's hand-washing before and after snacks and meals, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after messy play and after outdoor play,**

Sleep, rest, quiet time

» Staff provide for each child's comfort and each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation is met.

» The service works with parents and guardians in relation to children's sleep patterns and sleep needs.

» Staff recognise children's individual cues of tiredness indicating their need for sleep and rest.

See **Regulations 20 and 23.**

Mobility

» Children have opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment.

» The service has safe and comfortable spaces for infants, toddlers, or children not walking, to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk, and to be protected from children who are more mobile.

» If an infant or child is in a piece of equipment that constrains their movement, they are not in it for longer than fifteen minutes.

» Infants are not placed in equipment until they are developmentally ready.

Example: high-chairs/low chairs with straps

3. Relationships and interactions around children

Relationships support a sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing

» The service supports children to engage in positive interactions with other children.

Examples:
- **inviting another child to join in their play**
- **opportunities to participate in group activities.**

» The service supports children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with adults.

Examples:
- **showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,**
- **being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children),**
- **behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection),**
- **nurturing and comforting children,**
- **using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.**

The service works with parents, guardians and families

» The service respects and values parents, guardians and families of all diversities.

Examples:
- **communicating with parents and guardians in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner;**
- **providing parents and guardians with information, including significant events or activities involving their child.**

A strong ethos of teamwork is evident

» A team spirit is evident in the service.

Examples: daily informal discussions, regular formal meetings, mentoring programme in place.

4. Inclusion, diversity and transitions

Inclusion Policy

» There is an Inclusion Policy in place

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your Inclusion policy.

» There is evidence of the inclusion policy being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the inclusion policy.

» Relevant staff have received training on the inclusion policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

The service is inclusive, recognises diversity, and is welcoming of all cultures

» The service uses a child-centred approach, creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment.

» Staff adjust the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities.

Settling-in Policy

» There is a Settling-in Policy in place

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your settling in policy.

» There is evidence of the settling-in policy being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the settling-in policy.

» Relevant staff have received training on the settling-in policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

Supporting children's transitions

» Transition of children **into** the service – for example, on their first day – is made as easy and comfortable as possible.

Example:

- **The child is given time to settle into their new setting and allowed to bring tangible reminders of home with them**

(such as their favourite toy).

5. Children's positive behaviour

Policy on Managing Behaviour

» There is a Policy on Managing Behaviour in place

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your managing behaviour policy.

» There is evidence of the policy on managing behaviour being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on managing behaviour.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on managing behaviour.

See **Regulation 10.**

The social and emotional wellbeing of all children is fostered

» Children are supported to recognise, express and cope positively with emotions

Examples:
- **Listening to children in a caring, gentle way when they express emotions, and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times.**
- **Acknowledging and accepting children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses.**

» Children are supported to demonstrate self-confidence.

Example: choose activities that foster children's feelings of competence.

» Staff respond to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cry or become upset.

» Children are supported to develop self-confidence.

Example: choose activities that foster children's feelings of competence.

» Staff respond to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cry or become upset.

Children are supported to develop self-regulation and pro-social behaviour

» The social and physical environment is stimulating, challenging and interesting for children, and is focused on their active engagement and involvement.

» Staff help children to recognise and understand the rules for being together with others.

Examples: waiting for their turn, listening to each other, solving problems together, sharing.

» A climate is fostered where children know the boundaries and know how they are expected to behave within the service.

» Staff support children to enter into social groups, develop friendships with other children, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children and adults.

» Staff encourage and praise children for specific, positive and appropriate behaviours.

» Children are given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'.

» Children are supported in preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

» All children are supported and helped to manage their emotions.

Examples:
- **creating conditions that minimise conflict between children (providing enough popular equipment and materials);**
- **acting to prevent potential conflicts and encouraging the children to resolve conflict if it exists;**
- **responding promptly to children who are giving signals or cues expressing or indicating needs.**

Prohibited practices

» Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, humiliating, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are not carried out on any child while attending the service.

Examples: isolating a child in a room, hallway or confined space

» Corporal punishment is prohibited.

» Staff do not use any form of physical intervention.

Examples: physically restraining a child to manage their behaviour
– unless it is necessary to prevent injury to the child, to another child or to an adult. Any such incident is recorded, and the parents or guardians are informed of the incident and how it was managed on the day.

6. The environment supports each child's learning, development and wellbeing

The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supports each child's wellbeing, learning and development.

» The environment is comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and adults in the setting.

» The environment provides a range of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

» Materials and equipment are arranged so they are visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children.

» There are different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use are arranged or grouped together.

Examples: a literacy area, a sensory area, a dramatic play area.

» The materials and equipment available within the service encourage both active physical play and quiet play activities.

» Staff encourage children to interact and to engage with a range of materials and activities.

Examples: clay, puzzles, objects from nature, dramatic play props, mark making materials (colours, paper, chalk).

7. The service ensures effective programme delivery and quality of care

The programme of care in the service takes into account:

» The Service's Statement of Purpose and Function.

» Play as the primary mode of learning for children.

» The age and stage of development of the children attending the service.

» The length of time the child spends in the service (maximum 2 hours)

» The children's health and safety requirements.

» The supports necessary for children's wellbeing, development and learning.

Examples:

- **Promoting independence, but giving support when required.**
- **Providing a range and variety of child-initiated and adult-led activities for children to explore individually and as part of a group.**
- **Helping children to learn through active, hands-on experiences; playing, exploring, experimenting and discovering.**
- **Providing opportunities for children to take part in a variety of creative activities (music, dramatic play, science and stimulation of the senses).**

8. Technology, including the internet, photographic and recording devices

Policy on Using the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices

» There is a policy on using the internet, photographic and recording devices in place.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your policy on using the internet, photographic and recording devices.

» There is evidence of the policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices.

See **Regulation 10.**

Technology usage

» Technology, if available to children in the service, is only used to enhance and support children's learning and development and is used in line with public health guidelines.

» Where the service provides access to technology, it must ensure that the content is suitable for the child's age and stage of development, and supports the development of critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills.

» Children with additional needs are accommodated to use technology independently, as required.

» There is a defined retention period for all images and recordings taken within the service with parents' and guardians' consent, including CCTV recording and images posted on social media in line with the service's GDPR obligations.

» Images and recordings of the child are only kept or displayed in line with the policy's retention period.

Regulation 20: Facilities for Rest and Play

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must provide appropriate, safe facilities to meet children's needs for rest and sleep. You must recognise that appropriate indoor facilities within services are important for the developmental health and wellbeing of children. These facilities should be organised so that they engage every child in the learning environment and promote safe physical play and activity for children of different age groups and capabilities.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

Facilities for Rest and Sleep

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The management and relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to required facilities for rest and sleep, as appropriate to the service type and age range of children attending.

Please refer to Tusla's Guidance for the Early Years Sector on Sleep Provision for further information and advice on requirements for children under the age of 2 years who require sleep and rest in the service.

2. Children aged 2 years and over who require sleep/rest

» Children have a quiet space to enjoy unstructured, quiet activities of their choice or have a rest with soft seating and matting areas to sit or lie down.

Examples: Look at a book, listen to music, guided meditation.

» Children over the age of 2 needing sleep or rest within the 2 hour session have access to a low-level bed or mat.

» Each child is provided with an individual sleep mat or child bed (camp bed, stackable bed, mats) positioned in a way that allows easy access around each mat or bed.

» Beds and mats meet recognised safety standards (BS/EN).

» Sleep mats are cleaned between uses.

» Children aged 2 may be offered a pillow at rest or sleep time.

» Children aged 2 sleep on sleep mats or beds in the pre-school room where they are normally accommodated once the needs of all children in the room are met.

» Children over 2 who are sleeping/resting on beds/mats are supervised and checked on by staff who remain in the room.

3. Items prohibited for all sleeping children

» The following items are not used as a sleep facility by the service:

- car seats, buggies, strollers and infant carriers,
- inflatable mattresses, inflatable beds or waterbeds,

- beanbags,
- couches, sofas, settees and chairs,
- travel cots or portable cribs,
- bunk cots or stackable cots,
- pillows and cushions as a base to sleep on.

See **Regulations 19 and 23**

Facilities for Play

4. Roles and responsibilities

» The management and relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the facilities required for play.

See **Regulation 9.**

5. Play

» The play space is designed and arranged to:

- maintain a space that is clean, organised and free of clutter,
- accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group,
- divide the space into areas with materials organised in a way to support children's play and learning,
- provide all children full access (making adaptations as necessary) to the programme in the play space,

See **Regulation 19.**

Regulation 22: Food and Drink

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that all children attending the service receive a nutritious and varied diet, which takes their individual needs and preferences into consideration.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that adequate, suitable nutritious and varied food and drink are available for each child

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Healthy eating

Policy on Healthy Eating

» There is a policy on healthy eating in place

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your healthy eating policy.

» The policy is in line with the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services.

» There is evidence of the policy on healthy eating being implemented.

» Relevant staff know the requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on healthy eating.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on healthy eating.

See **Regulation 10.**

3. Food and drink

» Children have snacks and drinks suitable for the age and stage of development of the child.

» Clean and safe drinking water is available and accessible to children at all times.

» Water used for infants under 1 year is boiled and cooled before use.

» Water and milk are the only drinks offered.

» Breastfeeding supports are provided where required.

» Powdered infant formula is managed appropriately in the service

» Food safety provisions include:

- safe facilities to store food, including a fridge for perishable foodstuffs;
- a system where all food and drinks brought from the child's home are identifiable to the child.

See **Regulation 27.**

Section 4

Safety

The regulations that apply to this area are:

- **Regulation 23:** Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.
- **Regulation 24:** Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance.
- **Regulation 25:** First Aid.
- **Regulation 26:** Fire Safety Measures.
- **Regulation 27:** Supervision.
- **Regulation 28:** Insurance.

Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Purpose

The protection and welfare of the children in your service is paramount, and the children's safety and wellbeing is the priority. As a registered provider, you must be committed to safeguarding the children in your care, and to providing a safe environment where they can play, learn and develop.

The scope of this regulation addresses the following:

» General Safety
» Safe Sleep
» Administration of Medication
» Management of Outings (where undertaken)
» Infection Control
» Risks Management
» Accident and Incident Prevention
» Fire Safety

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider and each person working in the service has a clear understanding of their own role and range of responsibilities in the service to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service.

See **Regulations 9 and 29.**

General Safety

The following points listed may not address all safety issues. New risks and hazards can emerge over time. Therefore, the registered provider must ensure that all aspects of their service are reviewed and assessed to ensure the safety of all the children attending.

2. Infant formula

» If staff heat up infant formula or breast milk, the milk is warmed using a bottle warmer or by standing the feed in a container of warm water, for no more than 15 minutes.[4]
» Milk or other formula foods are never warmed in a microwave oven.

3. Choking hazards

» The following foods are not included in meals or offered as snacks:
  • whole nuts.
  • popcorn.
» All fruit and vegetables must be quartered or halved.

[4] PIF is managed in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Guidance Note no. 22,

Examples: grapes, cherry tomatoes.

» Hazardous small parts that may become detached during normal use, (or that could break off if the equipment was treated roughly), and that present a choking, breathing, or swallowing hazard to a child, are always out of reach and are only used under supervision.[5]

Examples:
- **strangulation hazards (straps, strings and cords)**
- **flaking paint**
- **small items in a sensory table.**

» Children are not allowed to blow up balloons, suck on, or put balloons in their mouths, or have access to un-inflated or under-inflated balloons.

» Nappy sacks used for disposing of soiled nappies are kept out of children's reach.

» The use of amber teething jewellery is prohibited for children under the age of 3 years.

» The use of Water beads is prohibited for children under the age of 5 years.

» The HSE recommend that children under the age of 3 do not wear jewellery as it is a choking hazard.

4. Toxic substances

» The following items are stored in the original labelled container in a safe and secure way, separate from stored medications and food, and are inaccessible to children:

a. cleaning and sanitising materials
b. liquid detergents
c. detergent pods
d. aerosol cans
e. pesticides
f. health and beauty products
g. medications.

» Shaving cream or foam is not used as play material.

» Toys and other products using button-cell batteries, such as small electronic devices, have lockable battery compartments.

5. Furniture, equipment and materials

Nappy changing mats and units (where required)

» The nappy changing tables are sturdy and stable to prevent tipping over.

» Nappy changing tables are at a height suitable for the staff to use.

Example: at waist level.

[5] Examples of other choking risks

» Nappy changing supplies are within arm's reach of the changing unit before a nappy change, and staff do not step away while the child is on the unit or table.

Equipment for meal and snack time

» High-chairs/low-chairs with straps used during snack times conform to safety standards.

» Equipment used during snack times meets the following requirements:

- Equipment is used according to manufacturers' instructions and is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.
- The service provides furniture and utensils that are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage children to be involved in and enjoy snack times.

Blind cords

» Internal blinds are safe and fitted correctly, with blind cords secured and out of reach of children.

» Beds, high-chairs, and so on, are positioned away from blinds.

Finger pinch protectors

» Finger-pinch protection devices are installed where a risk assessment identifies a risk to children, and any devices installed are purpose made and comply with fire safety regulations.

Examples: flexible plastic and rubber devices, adjustable door closing devices, other types of coverings for door gaps.

Portable heaters

The Fire Safety in Preschools (1999) document should be followed, and portable heaters should not be used. Where portable heaters cannot be avoided, they should be fixed to one adequately ventilated position and not moved around the premises (i.e. no longer "portable"). Additionally, the following controls should be in place:

- The heater is attended by staff while in use and turned off when unattended.
- is not accessible to children by use of a guard/cage.
- has a protective covering to keep hands and objects away from the heating element.
- bears the safety certification mark.

Example: CE mark.

- Is located away from curtains, papers, furniture, and any flammable object.
- is used in line with the manufacturer's instructions.
- is not used with an extension cord.
- is placed so the electrical lead is out of children's reach.

Furniture and equipment

» Furniture, toys and equipment on the premises conform to CE or BS/EN safety standards, as applicable.

» Daily inspection of play equipment takes place in the service.

» A monthly review of the up-to-date list of products recalls and products withdrawn from use by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission is done.

» Play equipment is installed and maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications.

» Equipment, materials and furnishings are safe and do not carry the following safety hazards:

- openings that could trap a child's head or limbs
- elevated surfaces and structures that are unstable and poorly guarded
- insufficient spacing between equipment
- components that can pinch, cut or crush skin and flesh.

» Equipment, materials and furnishings are placed to help prevent collisions and injuries.

» Equipment is not placed on uneven surfaces, near the top of stairs or within reach of a safety hazard, such as a window.

» Large pieces of furniture, including televisions, have stable bases and are securely anchored.

» Chairs and other furnishings that children can easily climb are kept away from cabinets and shelves.

» Stationary activity centres are used with the stabilising legs down in a locked position.

» Hazardous equipment is inaccessible to children or removed until it is made safe or replaced.

» 'Jumpers' (bouncing equipment attached to a door frame or ceiling) and infant and baby walkers are not used.

» Safety straps are used on all equipment or furniture if provided by the manufacturer of the equipment.

Ride-on toys

» Ride-on toys (such as tricycles) and wheeled equipment (such as scooters) used in the service:

- are assembled and maintained in line with the manufacturers' instructions
- are capable of being steered
- are of a suitable size for the child
- have a low centre of gravity – that is, that the balance point is near the ground to make it stable and less likely to topple
- are in good condition, work properly and are free of sharp edges or protrusions that could injure a child
- are not motorised.

Sand area

» Sand used in a sandbox is free of toxic or harmful materials and is replaced as necessary.

Examples: animal excrement, waste, and so on.

.» Sand play area covers are properly secured when they are lifted or moved to allow children to play in the sandbox.

Water play tables

» The service adheres to the following requirements for communal water tables:

- the basin and toys are washed and sanitised at the end of the day
- staff ensure that no child drinks water from the water table

- the floor and surface areas under and around the water table are dried during and after play.

Stair gates

» Stair gates forming a barrier for children under 24 months, and used by the service to restrict children's access to stairs and other specific areas of the service:
  - comply with fire safety requirements (designated fire escape routes/exits are not blocked)
  - may be fitted with alarm/sensors or magnetic locks that release should the fire alarm be activated
  - are properly fitted
  - conform to safety standards and requirements.

Trampolines

» Trampolines, both full and mini-size, are prohibited from being used, both on site and during outings.

» Trampolines, if prescribed as a therapeutic intervention, should only be used for that purpose.

» Bouncy castles (outdoors and indoors) should not be used.[6]

6. Structural

Please also refer to the Universal Design Guidelines for more information on structural issues.

Walkway surfaces

» Walking surfaces, such as footpaths, ramps and decks:
  - have a non-slip finish,
  - are free of water and ice and loose material,
  - are free of holes and flaws in the surface,

» Safe pedestrian walkways, drop-off and pick-up points at the service are:
  - clearly identified,
  - have been pointed out to all children, parents, guardians, staff, unpaid workers and contractors.

Stairways and ramps

» Guardrails are provided at open sides of external stairs, ramps, and other walking surfaces.

» Inside and outside stairs, ramps, porches and other walkways to the service's building are safe to use and are kept in good repair and are well lit.

» Damaged or worn carpet is repaired.

» Railings are strong, and do not have any footholds for climbing on, or gaps to fall through, crawl under or over.

[6] A bouncy castle is defined as an inflatable structure that children can enter, climb, or play on top of. This is not an exhaustive list.

7. Safe sleep

Policy on Safe Sleep

» There is evidence of the policy on safe sleep being implemented.

Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your safe sleep policy.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on safe sleep.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on safe sleep.

The safe sleep policy is in line with Tusla's guidance on sleep provision

See **Regulations 10, 19 and 20.**

8. Administration of medication

Policy on Administration of Medication

» There is an Administration of Medication policy in place

» There is evidence of the policy on administration of medication being implemented.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your administration of medication policy.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on administration of medication.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on administration of medication.

See **Regulation 10.**

9. Infection control

Policy on Infection Control

» There is a policy on infection control in place

» There is evidence of the policy on infection control being implemented.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your infection control policy.

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on infection control.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on infection control.

See **Regulation 10.**

10. Risk management

Risk Management Policy

» There is a Risk Management policy in place.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your risk management policy.
» There is evidence of the risk management policy being implemented
» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the risk management policy.
» Relevant staff have received training on the risk management policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

Retention of risk management records

» Risk management documentation, including all risk assessments completed, are retained appropriately by the service.

11. Accidents and Incidents

Policy on Accidents and Incidents

» There is an Accident and Incidents policy in place
» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your accidents and incidents policy.
» There is evidence of the policy on accidents and incidents being implemented.
» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on accidents and incidents.
» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on accidents and incidents.

See **Regulation 10.**

12. Fire safety

Fire Safety Policy

» There is a Fire Safety policy in place
» There is evidence of the fire safety policy being implemented.
» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your fire safety policy.
» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the fire safety policy.
» Relevant staff have received training on the fire safety policy.

See **Regulation 10.**

Fire drills

» Fire drills are carried out by setting off the fire alarm every month and at the start of each new school year and more frequently if necessary.

Examples:
- **following an ineffective fire drill practice,**

- **following a fire drill that identified risks,**

» Fire drills are carried out on different days of the week and at different times of the day.

» Fire drills include a complete evacuation of the service to a pre- arranged, designated assembly point.

Fire extinguishers

» The fire extinguishers used are suitable and appropriate for use in the type of service being operated.

» A qualified fire safety person approved the requirements for the service, and this approval is documented.

See **Regulation 26.**

Fire training

» The people using the equipment are trained in its use and were trained by a qualified person.

» Fire training is undertaken at least every 2 years.

Fire alarms and smoke alarms

» A fire alarm is in place in every premises used for Early Years Services.

» Fire alarms in the service are maintained in line with the requirements set out in the Fire Safety in Pre-Schools 1999.

» All alarms are checked every year by a competent person with appropriate training. Records of this testing are kept by the service.

» Self-contained smoke alarms (mains powered) are tested at least once a month by using the test button on the units to ensure the alarm is sounding. This testing is documented.

General fire safety

» Fire doors are not obstructed or propped open.

» Fire exits are clearly identified and easily opened from the inside.

» Where window restrictors are in use, they can be opened in the event of fire, using a child-resistant catch.

See **Regulation 26.**

Regulation 24: Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must only release children into the care of people who have been authorised by the parents and guardians, and who have been advised to the service. You must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to record the children's attendance at the service and that suitable resources are in place to do this effectively. You must also ensure that all people entering the premises are authorised to enter and their details are documented.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Each relevant staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to the checking in and out and recording the attendance of children in the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Authorisation to collect children

Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children

» There is a policy on authorisation to collect children in place.

» Please refer to Tusla's Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services and the associated policy guidance note for support when developing and reviewing your authorisation to collect children policy

» Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on authorisation to collect children.

» Relevant staff have received training on the policy on authorisation to collect children.

See **Regulations 10 and 15.**

3. Record of attendance: check-in and check-out record for children

» Each child attending the service is checked in and out by a relevant staff member (employee or unpaid worker).

» A record of each child's attendance is kept on a daily basis and is available and readily accessible to relevant staff.

» The record of attendance kept includes the following:

a. The full name of each child attending the service,

b. The date and time each child arrives and leaves the service,

c. A record of the name of one of the following people at the time that the child arrives at and leaves the service,

-the person who delivers the child to the service and collects the child from the service,

-the employee or unpaid worker responsible for checking the children in and out,

» If a record of attendance is also kept for each room in the service, it is good practice for the record to be updated when a child enters, leaves or enters.

» If there are more than 15 children attending, the Registered Provider ensures that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for checking the children in and out. This person is not included in the adult: child ratio

See **Regulation 16.**

4. Check-in and check-out register for other parties

» A daily check-in check-out register is in place for people entering the premises **other than**:

- a child attending the service,
- a person dropping off or collecting a child,
- an employee,
- an unpaid worker.

» The following information is recorded in the check-in check-out register for other parties:

- the date,
- the person's name,
- their contact number,
- the reason for their entry,
- the name of the person who approved access (employee or unpaid worker details),
- the check-in time,
- the check-out time.

» Access to the service is restricted until the check-in register is completed by the person requesting access, and their details have been authenticated by an employee or unpaid worker.

» Other parties recorded in the check-in check-out register do not have unsupervised access to children in the service.

5. Retention period

» The check-in check-out register is retained for one year from the date on which it was created.

See **Appendix 1** Service Record Retention Timeframe.

Regulation 25: First Aid

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must ensure the service has enough staff appropriately trained in first aid for children and are available in case of any injury or sudden illness. The number of staff with this training will depend on the number and needs of children attending the service and the rosters applied.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Each relevant staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to providing first aid to children in the service.

» Children with additional healthcare needs that require first aid are managed in line with the child's individual care plan.

Examples: diabetes, epilepsy, allergies.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Roster requirements for people trained in first aid

The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) is the independent statutory body which regulates pre-hospital emergency care in Ireland. The education and training standard established by PHECC is recognised by Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate as being inclusive of content and instruction relating to first aid for children. A list of recognised courses is available in the EYI's Regulatory Notice on First Aid.

» The number of people trained in first aid for children and available for first aid response is based on the service's risk assessments, including the size of the service and the hazards identified.

» A least one person trained in first aid is available to the children while the service is in operation.

» At least one person trained in first aid is available to the children when on outings.

» A list of people trained in first aid is available.

» In-date certification for each trained first aid trained person is available.

3. First aid equipment

» First aid boxes are restocked as required by designated staff member after each use.

» A list of supplies that the first aid box must have is included in the first aid box.

» The first aid box contains appropriate first aid supplies for minor injuries to be treated within the service.

» Medicines, creams or ointments are kept out of the reach of children and not stored in the first aid box.

4. Recommended contents of first aid box and kits:

Materials	First Aid Travel Kit Contents	First Aid Box Contents	
		1 - 10 people	11 - 25 people[7]
Adhesive plasters	20	20	20
Sterile eye pads (No.16 – bandage attached)	2	2	2
Individually wrapped triangular bandages	2	3	6
Safety pins	6	6	6
Individually wrapped sterile, unmedicated wound dressings Medium (No. 8) 10 x 8 cm)	1	2	2
Individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings Large (No. 9) 13 x 9 cm)	1	2	6
Individually wrapped sterile, unmedicated wound dressings Extra-large (No. 3) 28 x 17.5 cm)	1	2	3
Individually wrapped disinfectant wipes	10	10	20
Paramedic shears	1	1	1
Examination gloves (pairs)	3	5	10
Sterile water where there is no clear running water[8]	2 x 20mls	1 x 500mls	2 x 500mls
Pocket face mask	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing[9] - small (10 x 10 cm)	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing - large	1	1	1
Crepe bandage (7cm)	1	1	2

7 If more than 50 people are involved, supplies should be increased accordingly.

8 If mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed disposable containers should be provided. Each container should hold at least 20mls and should be discarded once the seal is broken. Eye baths, eye cups and refillable containers should not be used for eye irrigation due to risk of cross infection.

9 Where mains tap water is not readily available for cooling burnt area. The water-based burns dressing container should meet the recognised safety standards.

5. Accessibility of first aid equipment

» First aid equipment is marked, easily recognisable and accessible to adults, but inaccessible to children.

» A fully equipped first aid box is available within the service on each floor of each building used by pre-school children;

6. Emergency contact details

» Emergency medical assistance contact details are publicly displayed within the service.

Examples: a local doctors' number, a nearby hospital.

7. Recording of first aid care and responses provided

» Care given in a first aid situation is documented in line with the policy on accidents and incidents.

Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that the fire safety records are available and kept in the service for the defined period required. Also, these records must be open to inspection by the parents, guardians, employees and authorised people.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Each staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to the fire safety measures in the service.

See **Regulations 9 and 23.**

2. Record of fire drills

» Each fire drill that has taken place in the premises is recorded.

» The record shows that fire drills are carried out every month the service is in operation.

» The record shows that all children attending the service are included in the drill – that is, the fire drill is carried out at different times of the day and on different days of the week to include all groups.

» The fire drill record includes the following details:

a. date of drill,

b. time of drill,

c. how many children and staff are present,

d. length of drill,

e. routes of escape used.

3. Record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms

» The number, type, location and maintenance of records relating to fire equipment, including fire extinguishers and smoke alarm systems, is available and includes:

a. the maintenance certificate from a competent contractor or company,

b. the service details on the labels of portable fire extinguishers, fire safety blankets, and so on.

» Records showing self-contained smoke alarms are tested at least once a month to ensure the alarm tone is working.

» Records detailing all alarms are checked once a year by a competent person with appropriate training.

4. Access to records

» File records are stored securely.

» The fire drill and maintenance records are available to:

a. parents and guardians of children attending the service,
b. parents and guardians of children proposing to attend the service,
c. employees,
d. any authorised person.

5. Record retention period

» Records of fire drills and maintenance records of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms are kept for 5 years after their creation.

See Appendix 1: Service Record Retention Timeframe.

6. Fire notice

» There is a notice setting out the procedures to be followed if there is a fire.

» The fire notice is displayed in a prominent place in the service.

See **Regulations 10 and 23.**

Regulation 27: Supervision

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that all children are appropriately supervised at all times while attending the service. This supervision must not compromise the child's right to privacy.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Each relevant staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to supervising children at all times in the service and maintains the rights and dignity of each child.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Appropriate supervision

» Each child attending the service is under the supervision of a qualified staff member at all times.

» Children are supervised primarily by sight – that is, observation.

» Supervision for short intervals by sound (listening) is allowed, as long as relevant staff can talk with children who are out of sight.

Example: children who can use the toilet independently.

» Constant careful supervision by both sight and sound occurs to ensure children's safety, where risks are higher.

Examples: swimming, water tables, sensory play activities.

» Supervision is appropriate at all times, including during:

a. indoor activities,
b. snack times,
c. sleep time,
d. toileting and nappy changing,
e. technology use, including internet access.

» Supervision considers:

a. the required adult: child ratio,
b. the individual children's needs,
c. the activities being engaged in,
d. staffing levels so that supervision of children is not compromised due to unexpected staff absences.

Examples: late arrivals, unplanned leave (sick leave).

» No person on the premises is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that has a detrimental effect on their functioning or behaviour during the service's hours of operation.

3. Sleep

» Sleeping children are supervised at all times by:

  a. a staff member remaining in the room where children are sleeping; or

  b. a staff member going into the sleep room at least every 10 minutes and observing each child (only where children are sleeping in standard cots).

» Physical checks of sleeping children (at least every 10 minutes) are recorded in accordance with the service's policy on safe sleep.

» Where used, sound monitors increase supervision, but these monitors do not replace direct visual and auditory supervision.

4. Food and drink

» Children are supervised while eating and drinking.

5. Toileting

» Children who are able to use toilet facilities independently are supported to do so.

» Staff are within hearing range of children, in case help is needed.

6. Quiet play

» Spaces where children choose or have the opportunity for alone time or quiet play, are designed with visibility in mind that allows constant adult supervision in an unobtrusive way.

» Equipment and furniture are arranged to ensure effective supervision, while also respecting children's wishes for alone time and space.

Regulation 28: Insurance

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that the Pre-School Service is adequately insured.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The service is adequately insured, evidenced by a current certificate of insurance relevant to the type of service being operated.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Insurance cover

» The service's insurance includes the following, where appropriate:

a. public liability insurance,
b. insurance against fire and theft,
c. buildings insurance,
d. any other insurance requirements depending on the services provided as identified by the registered provider or the Inspectorate.

3. Insurance certificate

» The insurance certificate for the service is available and in date on inspection.

» The information provided on the relevant insurance certificate includes:

a. the contact details for the insurance provider,
b. the name and address of the service insured,
c. the categories of insurance cover for the service,
d. the number of children covered by insurance within the service,
e. the start date and end date of current insurance cover.

» The number of children in the service at any time does not exceed the number for which the insurance is provided.

Section 5

Premises and Facilities

The regulations that apply to this area are:

- **Regulation 21:** Equipment and Materials.
- **Regulation 29:** Premises.
- **Regulation 30:** Minimum Space Requirements.

Regulation 21: Equipment and Materials

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that there is enough suitable furniture, play and work equipment, and materials available on the premises of the Pre-School Service.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities relating to the availability, use, management and safety of the furniture, equipment and materials utilised in the service.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Availability of and access to equipment and materials

» There is access to a sufficient quantity of safe, well-maintained, high- quality materials and equipment, toys and furniture for all children.

» Equipment and materials facilitate all types of play and learning, engages all children and keeps them active and involved, whilst supporting and encouraging each child to experiment and explore.

See **Regulation 19.**

3. Equipment and materials are inclusive

» Materials, equipment and toys provide a rich and varied environment with regard to gender, race, culture, ethnicity and additional needs, to encourage respect for diversity, equality and inclusion.

» If the service provides outdoor play equipment and materials, they are of suitable design and size for early years children.

See **Regulation 19.**

4. Furniture and equipment

» Furniture is durable and child-sized or adapted for children's use.

» Adults have a comfortable place to sit, hold, and feed infants, and to read with, interact with and comfort children.

» The adult seating is suitable for use by adults.

» Materials are organised and grouped on open storage units at the children's level to encourage children to use them independently.

» Equipment, furnishings, toys, and play materials have smooth, non-porous surfaces or washable fabric surfaces that are easy to clean and sanitize, or are disposable.

» Furniture, toys and equipment on the premises conform to CE or BS/EN safety standards as applicable.

5. Personalised equipment

» Adaptive equipment is correctly used, if required by the children.

Examples: special toys, wheelchairs, and augmentative communication devices like picture boards or writing tablets.

See **Regulations 10 and 23.**

6. Maintenance

» Toys, equipment, materials and furniture are:

- Clean,
- in good condition,
- regularly checked for damage and wear and tear, and
- appropriately maintained.

» A cleaning schedule and programme is available and documented.

» Risk Management requirements are implemented as set out in Regulation 23.

Regulation 29: Premises

Purpose

As the registered provider, your service's premises must be safe, suitable for their purpose, and provide an appropriate environment for the children attending the service and the staff. The premises must comply with relevant statutory provisions and be clean and hygienic.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» The registered provider and relevant staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of premises.

See **Regulation 9.**

2. Sound and stable structure

» The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appear to be structurally sound, weather-tight and water-tight to ensure protection from weather.

» Each interior floor, wall and ceiling appear to be well finished with no evidence of toxic fumes or mould.

» Each window, exterior door and basement or cellar hatchway appears to be weather-tight and water-tight when closed.

» Drainage and septic tanks are inaccessible to children.

3. Safety and security of the premises

» Appropriate security systems are in place to protect the premises from any unauthorised entry, and unsupervised exit of children from the service.

Examples: a bell entry system, keypad entry, glazed panel at side of door.

» Exits are clearly identified and visible at all times during service hours.

» Rooms and areas are not used for any business or purpose unrelated to providing childcare when children are present in these areas.

» The physical environment is safe, secure, and suitable for purpose. This includes the following:

- passageways are free of obstacles,
- electrical sockets are safe,
- floor coverings are secured,
- floor coverings are non-slip,
- choking hazards are removed,
- safety devices are used on windows and doors (including visibility strips at a child's height),
- no trailing flexes are in children's reach,
- safety glass is installed, particularly in areas of low-level glazing and is clearly marked as such (BS6206),

- appropriate safety symbols are in place as appropriate,
- All areas are free from glass, rubbish, sharp or hazardous items, and visible debris, and are in a clean condition.

See **Regulation 23.**

4. Storage

» Equipment, including equipment not in use, is stored safely and in an organised and hygienic way.

5. Adequate lighting

» The service is an inviting bright environment with both natural and glare-free artificial lighting that provides enough light and comfort for activities.

» There is a balance between natural and artificial lighting.

» Natural light can be controlled

» The stairwells and corridors are well lit. There is emergency lighting with unobstructed and visible paths for entering and exiting, as well as clearly marked exits and emergency exits.

» Outside artificial lighting is provided at entrances and exits used by children and their parents and guardians to ensure good visibility if children are being dropped off or collected outside of daylight hours.

6. Adequate heating

» There is a suitable heating system to ensure a room temperature within a range of 18 - 22°C.

» Radiators have a surface temperature up to but no higher than 50°C, or radiators with a surface temperature higher than 50°C are guarded.

Example: radiator covers.

» Heating and boiler systems are certified as being maintained by an approved contractor, and this certification is up-to-date.

» Systems are in place to eliminate the risk of exposure to carbon monoxide in the service as appropriate

Examples: adequate ventilation, chimneys regularly cleaned, carbon monoxide alarms in place.

7. Adequate ventilation

Please refer to Tusla's **Guidance on Ventilation**.

» Fresh air can circulate in rooms occupied by children.

» Each room within the service, particularly sanitary and nappy-changing areas, are adequately ventilated, either naturally through windows that can be opened, or by mechanical ventilation, such as fans, air conditioners and so on.

» If mechanical ventilation systems are used, they are maintained, and a record of the maintenance is held.

» Areas that have been recently painted, carpeted, tiled, or otherwise renovated are ventilated before they are used by children.

8. Cleaning of premises

» The premises are kept in a clean condition in line with the Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and other Childcare Settings.

» A detailed Cleaning Programme is in place within the service setting out:

a. the items and areas to be cleaned;

b. the frequency of cleaning;

c. the person responsible for doing the cleaning;

d. the cleaning fluids and materials to be used;

e. the equipment to be used.

» Scheduled cleaning is carried out in a way, and at a time, that does not interfere with the care or welfare of the children.

» The cleaning programme includes the following items for routine cleaning: walls, floors, windows, windowsills, ceilings, light fittings and covers, doors (including handles), toilets, wash-hand basins, cupboards, shelving, radiators and radiator covers, cots, cot mattresses, sleep mats, refrigerator, food storage facilities, sinks, tables (including underside and legs), work and play surfaces, furniture, chairs, crockery, cutlery, toys, and so on.

» All toys that children put in their mouths should be cleaned and disinfected after use and before use by another child.

» Where cots are required, cots are cleaned between each child's use. If the cot is soiled with blood or body fluids, they are cleaned first and then disinfected with a chlorine-based disinfectant, then rinsed and dried.

» Waterproof cot mattress protection covers meet BS/EN safety standard requirements. If cots are used by a number of different children, then the mattress protector should be cleaned between uses to prevent cross contamination and the spread of infection

» Sleep mats and mattresses are waterproof, in a good state of repair, and are regularly cleaned with detergent and warm water, rinsed and dried. Cleaning is carried out before use by a different child, or immediately if they are soiled or wet, and at least weekly.

» Surfaces are physically cleaned, rinsed and dried before use or when visibly soiled.

» Whenever possible, disposable materials are used for cleaning.

Examples: paper towels, disposable cloths.

» Sponges are not used for cleaning and sanitising.

» If disposable cloths are not used, separate colour-coded, microfiber cleaning cloths and cleaning equipment are available for kitchen areas, children's areas and toilets. In the toilet areas, separate cloths are used for cleaning the toilet and wash-hand basin.

» Mop heads and buckets are not cleaned in a sink that is used for food preparation. Mop heads are not left soaking in dirty water.

» Buckets are emptied after use, washed with detergent and warm water and dried before storing.

» All cleaning equipment is stored clean and dry.

- Cleaning agents, disinfectant and detergents are used correctly and as instructed by the manufacturer.
- Bins used for the purposes of waste disposal should be pedal operated (exception is a caddy for food waste).
- Clean recyclable materials (i.e. paper, card) can be stored in an open lined bin.

See **Regulation 23.**

9. Cleaning requirements for sanitary equipment

- Toilets, sinks, wash-hand basins and surrounding areas are cleaned as needed, but at least twice a day.
- Where used, potties are emptied immediately and carefully into the toilet, cleaned then wiped over with a disinfectant and dried thoroughly using disposable paper towels. They are then stored appropriately.
- Gloves and equipment designated for cleaning and disinfecting toilet- training equipment and toilets are used for each cleaning and are not used for other cleaning purposes. Utility gloves are washed with warm soapy water and dried after each use.

10. Cleaning requirements for play materials and equipment

- Toys and play equipment are washed and disinfected in line with the manufacturer's instructions and the cleaning programme.
- Cloth or soft toys are machine washable on a hot cycle following manufacturer's instructions.
- Toys can be washed and disinfected.
- All toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or body fluids are taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. Toys waiting to be cleaned are stored separately.
- Soft modelling materials and dough are replaced regularly.
- Dressing-up clothes are washed in line with the cleaning programme.
- Sensory equipment, including ball pools, soft play areas or sand boxes, are cleaned once a week, or more often if required or contaminated.

11. Maintenance and repair

- The service is decorated appropriate to an Early Years Service.
- Flooring is smooth, hard-wearing, easily cleaned and non-absorbent.
- Carpets are kept to a minimum and used only in designated areas (for example a book corner).
- Carpets are not used in toilet rooms, nappy-changing areas, and areas where food handling occurs. Carpets are maintained in a hygienic condition.
- Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children safe from tripping or slipping.
- Walls and floors are kept in good repair, and are safe with no sharp edges, splinters, protruding nails or missing parts.
- All joints and crevices are sealed.
- Pathways are cleared and maintained during bad weather to prevent falls.

Please refer to Tusla's Guidance on Responding to Weather Conditions.

12. Waste disposal

» Rubbish is removed from rooms occupied by children and staff every day. It is removed from the premises regularly.

» Waste, both indoors and outdoors, is inaccessible to children.

» Waste bins are foot-pedal operated (except for food caddies and bins used to store clean recyclable materials).

» Soiled disposable and non-disposable nappies are stored in a way that will not give rise to bad smells or cause a risk of infection. Please refer to Tusla's Regulatory Notice on Nappy Bins.

» Bins are maintained in good repair and in a clean condition, and there are enough bins to contain all waste.

» Outside, waste is stored in rigid, lidded containers and fenced off from the outdoor play area.

» Bins and waste storage areas are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

13. Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities

» There is one toilet and one wash-hand basin for every 11 toilet-trained early years children.

Children's toilets

» Individual toilet cubicles are provided for children.

» Suitable, adequate, hygienic and soundly constructed sanitary accommodation (bathrooms with toilets, wash-hand basins and so on) is provided for toilet-trained children.

» Children can easily open every toilet door from the inside, and relevant staff can easily open toilet doors from the outside if adult assistance is needed.

» Toilet cubicles are sealed off from playrooms if the bathroom opens directly into playrooms or any occupied rooms.

Wash-hand basins

» Each wash-hand basin is equipped so that the user has access to:

  a. running cold and warm water. The warm water temperature should be no more than 43°C

  b. a supply of hand-cleansing liquid/foam soap

  c. disposable, single use drying cloth or paper towels.

» Step-ups are available for children if needed.

» Wash-hand basins are not used for rinsing soiled clothing, for cleaning equipment that is used for toileting, or for disposing of any wastewater used in cleaning the service.

Nappy changing (where required)

» The service has one nappy-changing unit, including a wash-hand basin and changing mat, for every 11 children in nappies.

» The nappy-changing unit and mat is smooth and easy to clean.

» Nappy-changing areas are separate from occupied rooms, including sleep rooms.

» Appropriate storage is provided for all necessary nappy-changing equipment

Examples: gloves, nappy supplies.

Protective clothing

» Single-use disposable gloves are available at the nappy-changing unit and are used by the relevant member of staff during nappy changes and changed between each child.

» Single use disposable gloves are used on each hand during nappy changes.

» A single use apron is available at the nappy-changing unit and used by the relevant member of staff during nappy changes and changed between each child.

Disposal of sanitary waste

» A leak-proof, foot operated. cleanable and sealable airtight container is available for disposing of used nappies, gloves and aprons.

» Wet/soiled non-disposable nappies are double bagged and placed in a sealed container that is not accessible to children and removed from the premises daily.

» A lined lidded pedal bin is provided for disposing of used paper towels.

Adult toilet and wash-hand basin

» Separate, adequate, hygienic and soundly constructed toilet facilities are provided for staff.

» A minimum of one toilet and one wash-hand basin is provided for every 8 staff.

See **Regulation 23.**

Regulation 30: Minimum Space Requirements

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must provide enough clear space indoors to meet the needs of all children.

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

1. Roles and responsibilities

» Relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to providing clear floor space relevant to the service type, and the number of children in any room of the service.

» The service has enough space to accommodate different types of play and activities, and the number of children who want to take part.

» The minimum amount of usable clear floor space per child 1.818 square metres of clear floor space.

See **Regulation 9**.

Section 6

Appendices

Appendix 1: Service Record Retention Timeframe

Regulation	Document	Retention Period
Registration of Pre-School Service: Regulation 6(6)	Safety Statement of the Service.	While the service is registered as an Early Years Service.
Management and Recruitment: Regulation 9 (1)(c)	Management Structure Record.	While the service is registered as an Early Years Service.
Review of Pre-School Service: Regulation 14(b)	Yearly review of policies/procedures/statements and practice.	3 years from the date the review is carried out.
Record of Pre-School Child: Regulation 15(4)	Record of an early years child.	2 years from the date on which the child **stops** attending the service.
Copy of Act and the 2016 Regulations: Regulation 18	Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013. Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.	While the service is registered as an Early Years Service.
Record in relation to a Pre-School Service: Regulation 16(2)(a)	References, Garda Vetting, Police Vetting.	5 years after the person starts working in the service. Includes current staff **and** staff who are no longer working in the service.
Record in relation to a Pre-School Service: Regulation 16(2)(b)	Record: » child's attendance on a daily basis; » any medication administered to an early years child attending with parents' consent; » any accident, injury or incident involving an early years child attending.	2 years from the date on which the child **stops** attending the service.
Checking In and Checking Out and Record of Attendance: Regulation 24(1)	Record of check-in and check-out of each child.	2 years from the date the child in question **stops** attending the service.
Checking In and Checking Out and Record of Attendance: Regulation 24(3)(b)	Daily written record of check-in of people other than: » an early years child; » a person dropping off or collecting a child; » an employee; » an unpaid worker.	1 year from the date to which it relates.
Fire Safety Measures: Regulation 26(3)	» Record of fire drills » Number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms.	Retained for 5 years after its creation.
Fire Safety Measures: Regulation 26(4)	Fire evacuation procedure.	While the service is registered as an Early Years Service.

Regulation	Document	Retention Period
Insurance: Regulation 28	Insurance Certificate.	While the service is registered as an Early Years Service.
Complaints Record: Regulation 32(4)	Record in writing of a complaint made to a provider about the service.	2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with (completed).

Appendix 2: Inspection in Context of Other Legislation

Building

Building Regulations and related Technical Guidance documents.

Child Safeguarding

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

Further information available on child safeguarding for early learning and care and school-age childcare services at the National Child Safeguarding Programme.

Fire Safety

Fire Safety Legislation, fire certification and associated technical guidance documents issued by the Department of the Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Food Safety and Hygiene, including Water Supply, for example:

Food Hygiene Regulations 1950-89, the European Communities (Hygiene of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2006 (SI No 369) Regulation, EC 178/2002 and Regulation (EC) No 852/2004.

Further information available on Environmental Health Services at: www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/environ.

Tobacco Control

Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002.

Note: These are examples of the current potential referrals that can be made when the Inspectorate considers that there is a real and potential risk to children. It may be added to as necessary, however this will be advised to you in advance.

Appendix 3: Development of the QRF

In 2014, Tusla undertook research into the quality of Pre-School Services based on an analysis of over 3,000 inspection reports. The research findings identified a need to develop and set out clearly the levels of evidence needed for regulatory compliance. Therefore, in 2015, the Early Years Inspectorate began to develop standardised levels of evidence required for each regulation. This process provided a baseline for developing the QRF throughout 2016 and 2017.The QRF was first published in 2018 and has been updated and revised to this 2nd edition, published in 2026.

The QRF brings together evidence-based, national and international research and best practice in Early Years Services. The Framework is child-centred with a specific focus on the quality and safety of the care provided directly to children using the services.

The QRF was developed in consultation with the following groups and agencies:

» Representatives of all stakeholders in the Early Years Sector in Ireland.

» Statutory and regulatory organisations whose work can impact on early years provision. For example – The Food Safety Authority, local authorities and so on.

» International regulatory authorities and the European Commission.

If you would like to read more about the consultation process undertaken in 2018, please contact rpdd@tusla.ie and request a copy of the report on the consultations.

Appendix 4: Explanatory Notes

There are some words and terms used in this document that have a particular meaning within the context of the statutory regulatory requirements in the Early Years sector.

We have, therefore, compiled these explanatory notes as a guide. We define the terms in alphabetical order, and, in some instances, we have given additional information about the term as well as its definition.

Accident:

An unpredictable and unexpected event that can result in an unintentional injury.

Access and Inclusion Model (AIM):

The goal of AIM is to create a more inclusive environment in pre-schools, so all children, regardless of ability, can benefit from quality early learning and care. The model achieves this by providing universal supports to pre-school settings, and targeted supports, which focus on the needs of the individual child, without requiring a diagnosis of disability.

Act of 2012:

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 (No. 47 of 2012). The Act commenced on 29 April 2016 and provides for the protection of children and vulnerable persons. It also provides for the establishment and maintenance of a National Vetting Bureau (children and vulnerable persons) database system. This provides for the establishment of procedures that are to apply to people who wish to undertake certain work or services or activities relating to children or vulnerable persons.

Aistear:

The early childhood curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. Aistear is the Irish word for journey. See also the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide

Better Start National Early Years Quality Development:

Better Start National Early Years Quality Development is a national initiative established by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) and hosted by Pobal. Better Start promotes quality and inclusion in Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings for children from birth to six years of age in Ireland.

Blind cords:

Window blinds that are opened and closed by means of a long pull-cord or continuous chain loop. All steps should be taken to ensure blinds are safe. The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) advises that:

- Cords of blinds and curtains are inaccessible.
- Looped blind cords are out of the reach of children.
- Cords ending in a loop are particularly risky. Cut the cord to get rid of the loop and install tassels.
- Cords and tassels should end at least 1.6 metres above the ground so children cannot reach them. Replace cords with curtain or blind wands.
- Where a service cannot cut the cords cannot be cut, a tie-down or tension device can be used to pull the cord tight and secure it to the floor or wall.

» Never put a cot, bed, high-chair or playpen near a window or patio door where a child can reach a curtain or blind cord.

» Keep sofas, chairs, tables, shelves or bookcases away from windows to prevent children climbing up and reaching curtain or blind cords.

A service must take all steps to ensure the safety of children from the risks associated with blind cords.

Internal blinds fitted after 2014 include a safety device for keeping the cord out of the reach of children and come with documentary evidence that the safety device meets the safety standards EN 16434:2014. Further information available from the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

Carbon monoxide monitors (CO):

Monitors that are used when organic fossil fuels such as oil, gas, timber, turf, briquettes or coal, and so forth are in operation. Regular inspection and maintenance of appliances, vents, flues and chimneys is required to protect occupants of the service from the danger of carbon monoxide. Advice from a qualified expert should be sought prior to the purchase and fitting of CO monitors.

Certified copy:

A true copy of a certificate or document.

In the case of a hard copy of a certificate or document:

» The registered provider has seen and inspected the original hard copy of the certificate/document and can verify that the copy is “a true copy” or an “authentic copy” of the original. The registered provider notes on the copy that it is a true copy of the original.

» If it is not possible for the registered provider to see the original hard copy of the document, they verify that the copy of the certificate of document bears the stamp of the relevant organisation or college.

Certified copies are sent to the registered provider with the consent of the person being vetted.

Child Safeguarding:

The Children First Act 2015 and the updated requirements of Children First: National Guidelines (2017) for the Protection and Welfare of Children place responsibilities on providers of a relevant service to ensure children in their services are safeguarded.

A Child Safeguarding statement is required to set out the Early Years Service’s commitment to safeguarding the children in their care and the processes in place to ensure a safe environment for each child attending the service where they can play, learn and develop.

Registered providers are required to hold all policies and procedures referred to in their Child Safeguarding Statement in place and available for inspection by an authorised person.

There are a number of resources that provide support and guidance for Early Years Services in developing their Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Clear floor space:

Space that is available in the service for the children to work, play and move.

Areas such as kitchens, toilets, hallways, sleeping and other service areas are not included in the space measurement and are not considered clear floor space.

When calculating the space requirement, the following are examples of furniture that **can** be included in the clear floor space:

» Furniture and play equipment used by the children – for example, children's tables, chairs, sand and water play, child-accessible low-level shelving that holds and displays children's toys and equipment, easels, dress-up racks, home corner and library area.

» Furniture that is used directly in relation to the care and education of children attending the service.

The following are examples of elements that **cannot** be included in the clear floor space:

» Permanent fixtures, such as storage cupboards for use by relevant staff or other purposes – for example, cleaning materials or furniture surplus to the needs of the children.

» Storage space.

» Excess storage of stacked chairs and tables in a part of the room.

» Equipment and furniture stored in the early years room which is not required for use by the children is deemed surplus to requirements.

Minimum space requirements are applied as set out in Regulation 30 and Schedule 7 of the Regulations. The registered provider must ensure that the required minimum space requirements are met for **each** child attending the service taking into account; the age of the child, their length of stay and the type of service being availed of.

Please refer to Tusla's Guidance 'When the Roof is the Sky' for specific information on space requirements in outdoor services.

Competent:

The necessary ability, knowledge or skill to do something successfully.

Also defined by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 as "a person is deemed to be a competent person where … the person possesses sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken".

Contractor:

In relation to an Early Years Service, a contractor is a person who carries out work in the service under contract – a formal agreement. This means that contractors have access to, or contact with, children attending the service – for example, people who carry out a workshop with the children, or people who carry out work in the service not directly involving the children (for example, repairs). Contractors must always be supervised when with children. Unsupervised access is unacceptable.

Deputy Person in Charge:

A named person appointed to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the person in charge in the event of their absence. If a sole operator chooses to have a deputy, this person must comply with the qualification and vetting requirements, and be capable of running the service in the absence of the sole operator.

Disclosure:

The action of making new or previously withheld or protected information known. The information may be of a sensitive and/or personal nature.

Disclosure is required in line with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.If the service receives a positive disclosure as a result of a Garda Vetting process, that indicates a recorded conviction in regard to an applicant, the employer will consider the contents

and undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the positive disclosure before any decision is made to employ the person. The risk assessment is documented.

The International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) is the required UK police clearance disclosure. The ICPC is a criminal records check against police and intelligence databases in the UK that reveals any convictions or reasons as to why someone should not work with children. ACRO Criminal Records Office will check police information and decide whether or not to issue an ICPC based on that information.

Director:

A member of the board of people that manages or oversees the affairs of a business. A director, in relation to a registered provider that is a corporate body, means a director as defined in the Companies Act 2014 (No. 38 of 2014) and, in the case of a board of management established under Section 14 of the Education Act 1998 (No. 51 of 1998), means each member of the board.

Effective management:

A way of running a service to the highest possible standards of care and safety and making the best use of resources. Effective management in an early years service ensures a child-centred and safe service by:

» continuously planning, following up, evaluating and developing the service

» developing ways of working in the service that are influenced by the interests, preferences and needs of the children

» structuring the learning environment of the service so the child has access to a good environment and materials for development and learning

» organising the service so children receive the support, help and challenges they need

» providing all service functions in line with good management practices, relevant legislation, regulations and national policies to protect each child and promote their welfare.

Effective management should aim to achieve the following staff behaviours:

» All individuals involved in the service of every culture, background, or belief are treated with respect and without discrimination within the service.

» Staff uphold and follow all relevant ethical standards and professional guidelines.

» Staff work as part of the team within the service, and take part in open, collaborative discussions to generate ideas and solve problems.

» Staff are professional in their work, by for example upholding standards in confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for children, parents and guardians and colleagues.

» Staff are committed to ongoing professional development and learning.

» Staff show leadership skills appropriate to the roles.

» Staff keep professional boundaries in relationships with relevant staff, children and parents and guardians.

» Staff implement effective governance to ensure that the service complies with the relevant legislation and regulations.

Emergency:

A serious, unexpected, or dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

Employee:

In relation to an Early Years Service, an employee is a person who has entered into, or works under, a contract of employment with the registered provider.

Fire safety:

A set of practices intended to eliminate or reduce the risk of fire, and to ensure the safety of occupants and limit damage if a fire occurs. Fire Safety in Preschools 1999 states the fire alarm requirements for the various types of Pre-School Service. Please refer to the document for full information. Please also refer to Tusla's Guide to Building Safety- Fire and Planning Requirements.

First aid:

First aid is provided where help is required to:

» preserve life or minimise the consequences of illness or injury until medical assistance arrives; and

» treat a minor injury, which does not require medical assistance.

Parent or guardian written consent is not needed to administer first aid in the service.

Medicines, creams or ointments are not stored in the first aid box as they may contaminate bandages, plasters and soon, and create a risk of infection.

The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC):

PHECC is an independent statutory agency with responsibility for standards, education and training in the field of pre-hospital emergency care (e.g. first aid). PHECC also maintains a statutory register of emergency medical services (EMS) practitioners. Further information is available at: http://www.phecit.ie

Food and drink – healthy eating:

Eating a variety of nourishing foods at regular times to maintain good health and growth. Services have many ways of organising food provision and mealtimes. It is acceptable to have a snack table of nutritious food, as long as the recommended daily nutritional requirements of the child are met. Food safety precautions must also be adhered to.

Hazard:

Anything with the potential to cause injury or ill health – for example, chemical substances, dangerous/broken equipment and materials, or threats of violence from others.

Herd Immunity/Population Immunity:

Herd immunity occurs when enough people in a population are immune to an infectious disease that it limits spread of that infection in a population. Vaccination can protect people from infection, and, in turn, they become less likely to be a source of infection to others. In this way, individuals who have not been vaccinated, or those who cannot be vaccinated, get some benefit from the immunisation programme.

High-chairs:

High-chairs provided must:

» have a safety harness that is used when a child is placed in high-chair, with the protective belt fastened securely. The HSE recommends a 5 point safety harness

» have a wide base and a secure locking tray, along with a crotch bar or guard to prevent a child from slipping down and becoming trapped between the tray and the seat;

» if foldable, it has a locking device that prevents the high-chair from collapsing;

» be assembled, used and maintained in line with manufacturer's instructions (This includes respecting the restrictions based on age and weight of children);

» be kept far enough away from a table, counter, wall or other surface so that the child cannot use them to push off, or to grab potentially dangerous cords or objects; and

» be cleaned after each use.

Immunisation:

Both the process of receiving a vaccine and developing immunity to a disease as a result. In Ireland, the law does not require that children be vaccinated in line with the National Immunisation Schedule.

This is a parents' and guardians' choice. However, it is highly desirable that children are vaccinated in line with the schedule unless there is a medical reason preventing it. Children who are not vaccinated may be dependent on herd immunity to protect against disease. The registered provider must be aware of which children attending the service have been vaccinated and which have not. This is important, so that those children who are not vaccinated can be best protected if an infectious disease occurs within the service.

Incident:

An unusual, unplanned event that may result in injury, illness or damage or disruption of normal service operations.

Individual risk assessment:

An evaluation of the potential risks that might occur in relation to a child and their individual needs. An individual risk assessment is completed if the individual needs of a child warrant it – for example, children with allergies, medication requirements, behaviour management issues, and so on. An individual risk assessment is part of a child's Individual Care Plan and is kept in the child's individual record.

Items prohibited as sleeping facilities for children (aged 2 years and under):

The following information sets out the items that are not suitable for children under 2 years to sleep in and explains why they are unsuitable.

The following are **not used** as a sleep facility by the service:

Car seats, buggies or strollers and infant carriers: These are not safe and/or suitable as a regular sleeping environment for infants and children. If a child falls asleep in such an item, they should be removed and placed in a suitable sleep facility such as a cot or floor bed.

Inflatable mattresses and beds or waterbeds: These items are not stable, offer no body support and do not allow for ease of movement.

Pillows, cushions and beanbags: These items pose a suffocation risk. A child should only sleep on a firm, flat surface, free of hazards.

Couches, sofas, settees and chairs: An infant's physical safety, comfort and support are not ensured with these items – for example, an infant could slip off a pillow into the gap at the back of a couch, or become trapped between a couch and a wall.

Travel cots and portable cribs: These are designed for occasional use only and have a maximum weight restriction. Most travel cots have mesh sides that are difficult to clean and maintain, creating a potential risk of germs. The mesh sides can stretch outside the cot and hold a

child's body part (a leg or an arm) in a potentially dangerous position. Mattresses for travel cots do not provide a comfortable surface for children to sleep on regularly.

Bunk cots or stackable cots: are not suitable for use for reasons of safety, including increased manual handling risks for staff, risks of a child falling from a bunk cot, risks of a bunk cot overturning, and increased risks to infection control. The recommended space of 50cm (half a metre) between cots is not possible when 2 bunk cots are attached to each other, as this increases the risk of cross-contamination (spread of bacteria).

The Key person approach is where each child is assigned one person to be their primary carer, with this person also acting as the link between the service and the child's parents. The key person approach is primarily focused on the relationships and communication between educator, parents and children.

National Vetting Bureau (NVB): provides Garda Vetting on behalf of organisations employing/facilitating (in a full-time, part-time, voluntary or student-placement capacity) people who work/have access to or vulnerable adults. The potential employee must make a written application through the organisation to which their area of work is affiliated – for example, Tusla, Early Childhood Ireland. The NVB provides vetting disclosures for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Notifiable disease: Any disease that, by law, must be reported to authorities. A notifiable, infectious disease is one that is on the list of diseases (and their causes) contained in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 to 2024. A list of the notifiable diseases is available at www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/.

The registered provider will notify Tusla of the infectious disease when the service has been contacted by the HSE's Department of Public Health and advised that the service has a confirmed case as listed. The Department of Public Health will advise you about what to do regarding precautions to be taken in your premises and follow-up of contacts and procedures.

Notifications of Accidents and Incidents: Registered providers must notify Tusla in writing of any accident or incident that occurs using the Notification of Incident Form, available on the Tusla website. This must be done within three working days of the service becoming aware of any of the following accidents or incidents occurring in the service:

- The death of a child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following their transfer to hospital from the service.
- An accident or incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time.
- An unplanned closure where the service has to close due to unforeseen events. That is, the service has to close unexpectedly. This may be for personal reasons (for example – bereavement), or any other reason – for example, a burst pipe in the service, external factors, and so on).
- A serious injury to a child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner in hospital or otherwise.
- An incident resulting in a child attending the service going missing from the service, or while on an outing organised by the service.
- A diagnosis that a child attending the service, an employee, an unpaid worker, a contractor or any other person working in the service is suffering from an infectious disease listed as notifiable in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 and subsequent amendments.

The registered provider will notify Tusla at ey.registration@tusla.ie of the infectious disease when the service has been contacted by the HSE's Department of Public Health and advised that the service has a confirmed case as listed. The Department of Public Health will advise you about what to do regarding precautions to be taken in your premises and follow-up of contacts and procedures.

Parent or Guardian: A parent is the child's natural or adoptive mother or father. A guardian is another person – not the natural or adoptive parents – who has legal rights and responsibility for the child. Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children – separation or divorce does not change this. If custody of a child is granted to an individual (parent, guardian or other legally responsible person), they may need legal documentation as evidence – for example, a custody or guardianship order. A custody or guardianship order issued is in line with the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, which amended the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964.

Person in charge: The person who has day-to-day charge of the service. This may be the registered provider, or the service manager, or another named person as being the person in charge. If a service is one of a chain of multiple services, there must be a named person in charge or at least one designated deputy person in charge present in each service while it is in operation.

Premises: The Early Years Service Regulations (2016), as amended, defines premises 'as any premises, or part thereof, where an early years service is provided or is proposed to be provided, including the area immediately surrounding, or adjacent to, such premises which is used in conjunction with such premises, other than any part of that area that is a public place'.

QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland is a State agency responsible for maintaining the 10-level NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications). QQI are also an awarding body and set standards for awards QQI make in the NFQ.

QQI validate education and training programmes and make extensive awards in the Further Education and Training sector, including in the Education and Training Boards. QQI also make awards in Higher Education, mainly to learners enrolled on courses offered by private providers. The universities and institutes of technology largely make their own awards. QQI also provide advice on recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland and on the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad. Part of QQI's functions is also to publish a directory of providers and awards in the NFQ.

Record: Usually, a written or electronic log of information and events. 'Record' under Regulation 2 means any record kept or retained in respect of the Regulations including any electronic record, book, card, form, tape, film, note or any record in permanent form, including a record that is not in a legible form, but which is capable of being reproduced in a legible form (for example, voice recordings that can be transcribed into text).

In addition, a record is defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Any record held electronically must be available, accessible, retrievable and capable of being reproduced if required.

Register: The list of registered Early Years Services established and maintained in line with Section 58C of the Childcare Act, 1991.

Registered medical practitioner: A medical doctor or specialist registered with the Irish Medical Council. Registered medical practitioner has the same meaning as it has in the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.

Registered provider: The person whose name is entered in the register in line with Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 as providing an Early Years Service. The registered provider is

the person who has signed the registration application form and is legally responsible for operating the service in compliance with the legislation under the 2016 Regulations and the Act.

Relevant service: Any organisation where more than one person works with children in a voluntary or paid capacity.

Relevant staff: Paid and unpaid staff, contractors, or any person who needs to have information about the service appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Relevant work: Any work or activities, carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to or contact with children or vulnerable persons, as defined in the Garda Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

Reputable source: 'A highly regarded, well thought of, respected person who is independent, unbiased and not a family member'.

Risk: The chance or possibility of danger, loss or injury.

Risk assessment: A written document that records a three-step process

1. Identifying the risks presented by hazards.
2. Assessing the risks presented by hazards.
3. Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of the hazards causing harm.

Room: A part or division of a building enclosed by walls, floor and ceiling.

Serious injury: Injury to a child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner in hospital or otherwise.

Síolta: Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and was developed in 2006 by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

Staff: A group of people who work for an organisation or business.

Staff supervision: A process where one worker, usually more experienced, is given responsibility to work with another worker (or workers) to ensure they meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competency, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support.

Student: In the context of Early Years Services, the term 'student' applies to any person who is taking part on a course offered by schools offering the Transition Year programme or educational organisations providing further education and training and higher education programmes leading to QQI awards at Levels 1 to 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a comparable equivalent award.

This can include programmes offered by:

» private and public providers; and

» the further and higher education sector.

See also: unpaid workers.

Tusla – The Child and Family Agency:

The dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. Tusla was established under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013.

Unpaid workers:

In relation to an Early Years Service, unpaid workers are people who work in the service but who are not paid for their work, for example, students and volunteers.

Validation:

A process that considers the legality or accuracy of a document. The registered provider dates and signs the document to evidence it has been validated. The terms validating, verifying, confirming, checking and vetting are terms that are used interchangeably.

In respect of a previous employer reference/statement of employment for a prospective staff member, each reference must be validated by the prospective employer by contacting the referee and asking a series of questions to ensure that:

- The reference and its contents are correct
- That it relates to the person about whom it is written.
- The dates of employment are correct as stated in the reference/statement of employment.

A written record should be kept of the validation with the following details:

- The date the reference was verified.
- The person the prospective employer spoke to.
- The main points of the conversation.
- The signature of the person who undertook the verification process.

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