

**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

**EARLY  
YEARS**  
INSPECTORATE

# Quality and Regulatory Framework

For Full and Part-Time Pre-school Services



**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 full day and part-time pre-school service types as follows:

**A Full Day Care Service:**

An Early Years Service offering a structured day care service for early years children for more than five hours a day. This service may include a part-time and/or sessional service for early years children not attending the full day care service.

**A Part-Time Service:**

An Early Years Service offering a structured day care service for children for more than 3.5 hours but less than 5 hours a day. This service may include a Sessional Early Years Service for children not attending the Part-Time Day Care service.

Please see the companion Quality and Regulatory Framework documents for [Sessional and Drop-In 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 2025, 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
2	Updated definition of pre-school child
3	Authors note updated
7	Foreword updates
8	New layout of sections.
12	Abbreviations table updated
Multiple	Updated internal and external Links
15	Infographic updated
15	Updated wording where required on stakeholders
Section 2	All previous policy information has all been stripped out and a link inserted to the webpages for each policy guidance note.
Multiple	Added 'appropriately qualified' to adults in respect of adult:child ratio
Multiple	Vetting information has been updated- links updated.
20	Information on Garda and International Police vetting updated
25	Clarification that staff recorded off on a break are not considered available to children
Multiple	Wording adjusted to clarify that a sessional service may include ECCE programme.
Multiple	Wording adjustment for 'immunisations' through document following advice from HSE.
39	Updated infections disease legislation information
40	Added HSA to list of agencies that may need to be notified
Multiple	Link to EYI sleep guidance inserted and some text removed as covered in sleep guidance
Multiple	Link to EYI guidance on outdoor services inserted as required
58	Updated information on a care plan
62	Update on height of fence
Multiple	Link to updated DCDE Nutrition Standards inserted
Multiple	Link to EYI regulatory notices inserted.
70	Clarification that CE/BS/EN standards are 'as applicable'
72	Reference to bouncy castles prohibited
95	Added link to EYI Guidance on ventilation
96	Added line on hygiene for mouthed toys
96	Added line on cleaning waterproof mattress protectors
97	Added clarification on pedal bins
99	Updated text re: gloves and aprons in nappy changing
102	Section on maximum group size updated. Information for sessional/drop-in services explained further in relevant QRF.
108	Blind cord information condensed
109	Safeguarding information updated
112	ECCE programme description updated
115	Population immunity section updated
115	Immunisation section updated
116	Prohibited sleep items section condensed
119	Definition of an outdoor service added
119	Definition of a premises updated
119	QQI section 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**



# 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.

## Section 2

This section contains:

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 3

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.

**Section 2** deals with the **Regulations** and describes the purpose of each regulation and the elements required for compliance. Throughout this section, **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 3** is titled **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. In this section, we define the terms in alphabetical order, and, in some instances, we give additional information about the term as well as its definition

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.

Also, throughout the Framework, we use [Explanatory Notes](#) – some words or phrases 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. Or it might bring you to a website if your device has access to the internet.

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](#).

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

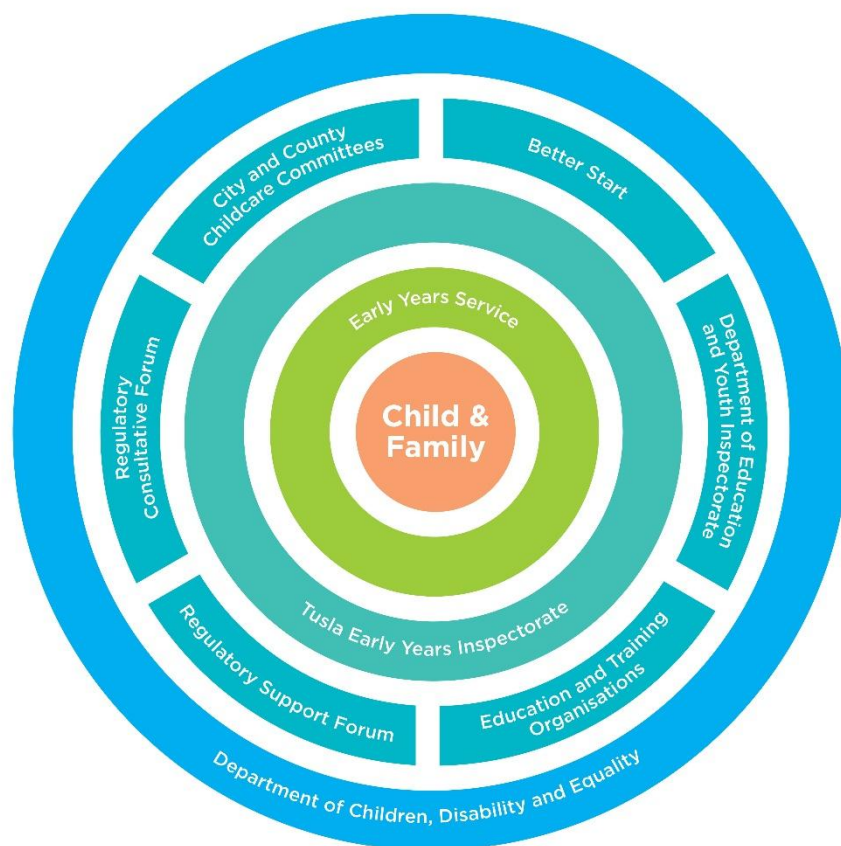
Please refer to [Tusla's guidance and resources](#) for more information on regulatory inspections.

## 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)<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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

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## 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 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<sup>2</sup>,
  - 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,

<sup>2</sup> Being responsible for making decisions and justifying actions.

- » 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.

## 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 is appointed, assigned or allowed access to, or contact with, a child attending the service.
- » Each [employee](#), [unpaid worker](#) and [contractor](#) who has access to children is vetted.
- » Where relevant, company directors or board members who have 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 access to/contact with children 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,<sup>3</sup>
  - 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,
- 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 with access to children 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 vetting 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 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.

<sup>3</sup> A highly regarded, well thought of, respected person who is independent, unbiased and not a family member

- » 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.
- » 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.
- » 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.
- » 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.

This is evidenced by:

- having time set aside for one-to-one discussions and staff meetings for staff to ask and respond to questions without interruptions, and to communicate important information and provide feedback to management about the service,
- having staff meetings facilitated by a senior member of staff. Minutes are taken and made available, and actions are implemented, and
- having one-to-one supervision meetings between staff members and their manager.

## 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
  - Outings (where children attending the service are brought on such outings)

- Accidents and Incidents
- Authorisation to Collect Children
- Healthy Eating
- Outdoor Play (where such play is provided to children attending the service)
- Staff Absences
- Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices
- Recruitment
- Risk Management
- Settling-in
- Staff Training
- Staff Supervision

### **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, while on outings and during staff breaks. Staff on their breaks are not considered 'available' to work directly with the children.
- » 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 as a First Aid Responder)
  - 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 and age range of children	
<b>Full/part time service per age- range of children</b>	
(0 - 1 years) 1:3	(2 - 3 years) 1:6
(1 - 2 years) 1:5	(3 - 6 years) 1:8
<b>Sessional Service in a Full/Part time service per age-range of children</b>	
(0 -1 year) 1:3	(1 - 2½ years) 1:5
(2½ - 6 years) 1:11	
<p>» A child attending on a full/part time basis avails of a sessional service (including the ECCE scheme) once a day only.</p> <p>» The adult:child ratio of 1:8 or 1:6 is effective after 3.5 hours (when the Sessional Pre-School Service has finished) and the child is staying on in the Full Day Care Service for the rest of the day.</p>	
At least 2 adults are on the <a href="#">premises</a> at all times.	

- » If a [person in charge](#) is included in the adult:child ratio, their managerial duties do not detract from direct care of the children.
- » If mixed age groupings are accommodated in the same room, the ratio is applied in line with the age of each child and the type of service being availed of by each child.

See the example in '[mixed age groups](#)' in the explanatory notes.

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 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 management and 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,
  - 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. This includes a walk around the service, observing practices and talking with staff.

**Reviewing policies, procedures, statements and practice to determine:**

## 5. The service is being well governed.

The following must be considered:

- » 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.
- » Children have access to outdoor play.
- » Children's outings (if undertaken) are conducted safely.
- » [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.
- » Outings – if undertaken (including transportation of children).
- » Child Vaccinations.

## **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, for example – at team meetings.
- » 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 date on which the child first attended the service.
  - The date on which the child stopped attending the service where relevant,
  - 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.
  - » If there is an Individual Care Plan in place, this information is included with the child's records.
  - » The name and telephone number of the child's [registered medical practitioner](#) is included.
  - » A record of all [immunisations](#) the child has had is included.
  - » Written parental or guardian consent is included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment in the event of an [emergency](#).
  - » Entries in the children's records are factual, consistent, accurate and reviewed.
  - » The record has been updated if the child's information changes.
  - » Each entry in the child's record is signed by the person making the entry.

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**

» Children's records are kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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 stops 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, the curriculum framework and any additional needs or interests provided for.
  - If the service is operating fully or substantially outdoors.
  - 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
- parent or guardian meetings.

### 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 2

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## 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 meals and snacks are served at regular times, but there is flexibility.

**Example: if a child is deeply engaged in play.**

- » Healthy meals and snacks are served no more than 3 hours apart.
- » Meals and snacks are appetising and healthy for children.
- » Snacks and water or milk are always available to children when needed.
- » Enough time is allowed for bottle-feeding and mealtimes.
- » Infants younger than 12 months are held while being bottle-feeding.
- » Each child is given enough time to eat and enjoy their bottle, snack or meal without being rushed.
- » The atmosphere during mealtimes is relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults.

**Example: staff sit with children during mealtimes to give example of positive social skills.**

- » The [staff](#) encourage and support the children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- » The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used are suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.

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

- » Bibs are available for babies and toddlers at mealtimes.
- » Children are never forced to eat or drink.
- » Children who have not eaten, or who are hungry are offered:
  - food at times outside of routine meal and snack times.
  - an alternative food option.
- » Children are seated at the table or in a high-chair during snack and mealtimes, when their food is ready.
- » Children sit at a comfortable height in relation to the table-top.
- » The table and chair are suitable for their age and stage of development.
- » Children are encouraged to try different food tastes, textures, colours, and so forth.
- » Children are supported to develop knowledge and skills to make nutritious food choices.
- » Learning materials and experiences are available to reinforce nutritious food choices.

**Examples: books, play food, food guide pyramid for young children, food representing a variety of cultures, cooking experiences.**



- » Activities are available for children who have finished their food before others.

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, toileting and toilet training.
- » Toilet training is based on the child's developmental level and their own readiness to start, rather than their age. Toilet training is agreed on and supported by [parents and guardians](#).
- » If there is an individualised toilet training plan, it is co-ordinated with the parents or guardians and kept in the child's individual [record](#).
- » 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.
- » Staff encourage and support children to become more independent in toileting practices, and to take part in the process if they are physically able.

### **Example: flushing the toilet themselves.**

- » 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.

For services operating outdoors, please refer to Tusla's Guidance document '[When the Roof is the Sky](#)' for further guidance on nappy changing and toileting.

## **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,
- promoting the habits of regular tooth-brushing, where this is a practice in the service,
- providing opportunities for children to pour drinks and serve themselves and others during meal and snack time, using a variety of suitably sized utensils, cutlery, and drinking items,
- providing individual space for each child's belongings, (individual coat hooks or cubby holes for a backpack, to support organised access and independence),
- promoting children's understanding of safety and accidents (role-playing, cleaning up spills).

## **Sleep, rest, quiet time**

- » Sleep provision for children under the age of 2 years is always in line with Tusla's Guidance document on [Sleep Provision for the Early Years Sector](#).
- » 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.
- » Sleep provision in the service is flexible, agreed with parents and reflects the child's sleep patterns at home as much as possible.
- » Staff facilitate children to sleep or rest when they are tired, and not just at a designated time.
- » Staff recognise children's individual cues of tiredness indicating their need for sleep and rest.

- » The nap and sleep times of each child are facilitated according to each child's individual needs and the hours they are in the service.

See **Regulations 20 and 23.**

## **Mobility**

- » Children have opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment, both indoors and outdoors.
- » 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.
- » Children have plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- » If an infant or child is in a high-chair or other piece of equipment that constrains their movement, they are not in it for longer than fifteen minutes, other than at meals or snack times.
- » Infants are not placed in equipment until they are developmentally ready.

**Example: highchairs.**

## **3. Relationships and interactions around children**

**Relationships support a sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing**

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

### **Examples:**

- assigning a [key person](#) to each child,
- 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),
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language,
- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking,
- nurturing and comforting children,
- using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.

- » The service supports children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with siblings, peers and other children.

**Examples:**

- planning time when infants, younger children and older siblings or friends can be together,
- supporting children in developing their interactions and friendships with other children, especially those who are new to the service, have additional needs, or are learning English as an additional language,
- providing opportunities for small and large group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork and a sense of belonging,
- ensuring that children have ongoing opportunities to interact informally with one another (free play, parallel play, eating together),
- providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
- providing ongoing opportunities for children to recognise and accept similarities and differences between them,
- ensuring no child is bullied, mocked or excluded,
- supporting children to notice and understand how others are feeling, and how to comfort and help them.

**The service works with parents, guardians and families**

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

**Examples:**

- recognising parents and guardians as the primary carers and educators of their children,
- communicating with parents and guardians in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner, while being open and honest,
- working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns,

- providing parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child (for example, their child's sleep and rest patterns),
- providing opportunities for parents and guardians to be involved with service activities, taking into account the family circumstances, the parents' or guardians' particular interests and their time commitments.

### **There is integration with local, regional and national community**

» There are established networks with the wider community.

**Examples: library visiting the service, national organisations, sports clubs, community representatives visiting the service (scout leader, football coach, postman, farmer, and so on).**

» Community involvement is helping to inform, build on and enhance the quality of the programme.

### **A strong ethos of teamwork is evident**

» A team spirit is evident in the service.

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

» Staff work together to achieve the same goals.

## **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 where each child has equal opportunity by a variety of means.
- » Routines, experiences, materials and activities within the service reflect diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, religions, skin colour, family structures, language, cultures or additional needs in a positive way, which helps children to learn, become aware of and be respectful of differences.
- » Each child's critical thinking is fostered, and children are empowered to recognise and respond to, or challenge, bias, injustice and discrimination.
- » All children, including those who have additional needs, those who are dual language learners, or who are new to the community, are supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day within the service.
- » Staff adjust the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- » Staff use positive strategies to support children's inclusion.

**Examples: using personal greetings, looking at family photographs, giving appropriate encouragement, accepting children's best efforts.**

### **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.

### Examples:

- Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the service before their child attends and are invited to stay with the child as they take whatever time is needed to adjust to their new environment.
- 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).

- » Transition of children **within** the service – for example, changing groups – is made as seamless and comfortable as possible.

### Examples:

- The children take part in preparing for the change.
- The children are made aware of routines and daily transitions so that they know what to expect, and can prepare themselves for transitions (for example, tidy-up time song).

- » Transition of children **from** the service – for example, into primary school – should be well planned and organised to make the transition comfortable and as seamless as possible.

## 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:**

- **Being supported to communicate their needs and wants, verbally and non-verbally (picture cards, hand signals), in a positive way.**
- **Discussing and naming their wide range of emotions and feelings, while empathising with feelings of others (happy, sad, angry, feelings of exclusion and feeling hurt).**
- **Supporting children to develop techniques that help them manage their positive and negative feelings**
- **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 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 who show signs of social and emotional difficulties are given the appropriate care and support within the service.

## **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.

**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,**
- **encouraging children to negotiate and resolve conflicts with adult support and guidance, when necessary,**
- **actively supporting children in solving their differences and problems without being 'told' or 'ordered' what to do, and**
- **prompting and supporting children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing strong emotions.**

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

**Examples:**

- **reviewing the child's programme of care to ensure it is meeting the child's care, learning and developmental needs,**
- **reviewing the approaches taken to address a child's ongoing challenging behaviour, so that every opportunity is taken to make sure the behaviour improves,**
- **engaging with the child's parents or guardians to work with them on addressing the issues relating to the child's behaviour (developing a behaviour management plan, assessing the need for help from external experts or professionals), and**
- **developing a risk assessment to manage the risks associated with the behaviours to the child and to other children and staff.**

### **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: withholding food as a punishment, 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, within the ethos and philosophy of the service**

- » 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, appropriate with their stage of development.
- » The atmosphere in the learning environment is encouraging and unhurried and reflects a [slow relational pedagogy](#).
- » Staff encourage children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child's needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.

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

- » The environment is flexible and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences and interests of the children.

### **The indoor environment**

- » The service provides an environment that is visually pleasing, allows the children to think for themselves, and extends learning.

**Examples: displaying topics of interest at eye level to the children, displaying children's own artwork, using labels and pictures to help children identify materials.**

- » There is access to enough varied materials and equipment, which are rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests and skill levels.

- » Play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes and sizes to experiment with and explore freely are available in the service.

**Examples: natural objects such as twigs and stones, open-ended objects such as play dough, and found materials such as seashells.**

- » 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.

## **The outdoor environment**

- » The outdoor area is an extension of the well-planned indoor area and is linked with the learning that goes on inside.
- » Children have opportunities to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions, except where a [risk assessment](#) does not allow.
- » The equipment and materials in the outdoor play area support children's play, movement and exploration, and provides opportunities exclusive to the outdoors.
- » Safe and comfortable outdoor spaces are provided for children who are not yet walking.
- » The outdoor play environment provides activities and opportunities for:
  - fresh air,
  - discovery,
  - relaxation.

**Examples: a quiet area, a planting area.**

- children to release energy,

**Example: chasing bubbles.**

- physical exercise and play,

**Examples: jumping, climbing.**

- exploring, engaging and experimenting with nature,

**Examples: water, gardening.**

- learning about risk and learning from risk, and challenging their own capabilities within safe limits,

**Examples of risky play:**

- swinging,
- running,
- rough and tumble,
- exploring,
- trees for den making,
- raised areas where children can balance.

- team games

**Examples: obstacle course, tag.**

- learning that will enhance all aspects of their development.

Services can also refer to Tusla's Guidance document ['When the Roof is the Sky'](#) for more information on the outdoor environment. While the primary purpose of this guidance document is to support services operating fully or mostly outdoors the principles and practice examples can be applied in all service types.

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

**A meaningful programme is designed or adopted, taking 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.
- » The children's expressed interests and choices
- » The children's health and safety requirements.
- » Respect for the child as a partner and an active participant in the service.
- » Ongoing observations and assessments from various sources to create a complete, well-rounded picture of each child.
- » The supports necessary for children's wellbeing, development and learning.

**Examples:**

- Being responsive to a child's need to rest or be active, with a balance of quiet and active activities.
- Providing children with schedules and daily routines that are predictable, but flexible.
- Providing opportunities to learn about proper nutrition, personal hygiene, good health, self-help and personal safety.
- Allowing enough time and support for transitions.
- Promoting independence but giving support when required.
- Providing opportunities to explore, accepting and appreciating diversity (gender difference, differences in family composition).
- Providing a range and variety of child-initiated and adult- led indoor and outdoor activities for children to explore individually and as part of a group.
- Undertaking [outings](#) to enhance learning opportunities for children.
- Enhancing opportunities for:
  - Physical development (fine and gross, rhythm and movement).
  - Cognitive development (problem solving, critical thinking, reasoning, imagination).
  - Linguistic development (communication, language and literacy).
  - Emotional development (self-awareness, self-confidence and self-regulation).
  - Social development (social skills and relationship building).
  - Sensorial development (stimulating senses in active play experiences, combining the senses of touch, vision, hearing, taste and smell).
- 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).
- Providing opportunities for the child to be challenged, to take risks, achieve mastery and success and engage in old and new learning and concepts.
- Providing children with opportunities to take the lead and to make choices and decisions.

## Individual care plans

» Where a written Individual Care Plan is required, the service ensures that the care provided to each child is in line with their own plan. The plan:

- is developed with the service, as appropriate,
- describes the current developmental requirements of the child,
- details any chronic diseases or health issues the child is currently receiving treatment and care for.

### **Examples: allergies, asthma, sensory conditions,**

- documents current medications, medical treatments and other therapeutic interventions, including arrangements for administration training if required,
- specifies how the service will meet the child's needs.
- The care plan must be adequate in detail and give clarity regarding the steps to be taken to safely care for the child.
- Where appropriate a clinician/specialist may have input into a care plan, for example a child with diabetes, epilepsy or a significant allergy, however they are not required to sign the care plan.

### **Examples:**

- **Providing developmental variation, sensory impairment, or additional needs.**
- **Providing emotional and behavioural support.**
- **Providing emergency care for a defined medical condition.**
- **The Care Plan does not need to be signed by a clinician.**

## 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 and outdoor 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 over the age of 2 needing sleep or rest 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.
- » When all or part of the pre-school room is in use for rest, the needs of all children both sleeping and awake are met.



- » Children who are awake and who do not require sleep and/or rest may be taken to another area in the service while other children are sleeping and resting.
- » Alternatively, quiet activities are organised in another section of the room for children who are not sleeping and/or resting.

**Examples: reading, jigsaws, colouring.**

### **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 both indoors and out.

See **Regulation 9.**

### **5. Indoor play**

- » The indoor play area 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 indoor space,
  - give all children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities (making adaptations as necessary) to promote children's inclusion, welfare and development.

See **Regulation 19.**

## 6. Outdoor play

- » Relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the service's policy on outdoor play if such play is provided to children attending the service.

Please also refer to Tusla EYI's guidance ['When the Roof is the Sky'](#) for further information on outdoor play.

See **Regulation 19**.

### Access to outdoor play

- » Since the introduction of the Regulations in 2016, the vast majority of services provide a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space on the [premises](#) that is accessible to the children on a daily basis
- » Where the outdoor space is not on the premises, it is suitable.
- » Children access the outdoor space on a daily basis, unless it is determined to be unsafe to do so on a given day or time, following a risk assessment by the service. Please refer to Tusla's guidance document ['Keeping Children Safe and Comfortable Indoors and Outdoors in All Weathers'](#) for further information and advice.
- » The service balances the need for safety with the need to provide physical, challenging experiences.
- » The equipment and materials available in the outdoor play area reflect the high quality of the service, and provide children with play, movement and exploration opportunities that are exclusive to the outdoors.
- » All children have full access (making adaptations as necessary) to the programme in the outdoor space.

See **Regulation 19**.

### Safety requirements where the outdoor play area is on the premises

- » The outdoor play area is reached by a route that is always free of [hazards](#).
- » The outdoor play area is enclosed with a fence/natural barrier that is of suitable height and design to ensure children's safety.
- » The outdoor play area is adequate in size for the number of children using it, and it is suitable for their age groups.
- » Time slots are scheduled if space is limited.
- » Fences and barriers prevent access to streets and other dangers, such as pits, water hazards or wells. The barriers do not prevent the children being in sight of relevant staff.

- » Children are not exposed to
  - catch points, sharp points, and protruding hardware.
  - areas where they may get trapped.
  - tripping hazards.
- » Large play equipment in the outdoor area meets EU safety standards and are installed and used according to the manufacturer's requirements.
- » Staff supervise all children by both sight and sound in all areas with access to water.
- » The service boiler, refuse bins, oil tank or gas supply are inaccessible to children in outdoor play areas.
- » Pest control bait boxes are inaccessible to children in outdoor play areas.

### **Outdoor play where the outdoor play area is off the premises**

- » There is an outings policy in place.
- » The outings policy is implemented where required.
- » 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 outings policy.
- » A risk assessment is carried out before every visit.
- » The risk assessment identifies any hazards and how any potential risk of injury or incident from these hazards can be eliminated or safely managed.
- » Children are not exposed to any unwanted attention while in an outdoor play area not located on the premises.

See **Regulation 23**.

### **Policy on Outdoor Play (if such play is provided to children attending the service)**

- » There is a policy on outdoor play 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 outdoor play policy.
- » There is evidence of the policy on outdoor play being implemented.
- » Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on outdoor play.
- » Relevant staff have received training on the policy on outdoor play.

See **Regulation 10**.

# 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

- » Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes are available for children.  
The food is suitable for the age and stage of development of the child, and there is enough food supplied to cover the number of hours the child is in the care of the service.

- » Children in Full Day Care – that is, for more than 5 hours – have at least two meals and two snacks offered to them, one of which is a hot meal. If a child does not want the food offered for any reason, a healthy alternative is offered.
- » Children attending for up to a maximum of a 5-hour session are offered at least two meals and one snack. It is not necessary to have a hot meal.
- » Children attending for up to a 3.5-hour session have one meal and one snack.<sup>4</sup>
- » 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.
- » Children are supported to self-serve as appropriate.
- » Water and milk are the only drinks offered.
- » The meals and snacks are of [appropriate textures for infants](#).
- » Breastfeeding supports are provided where required.

**Examples: provide storage for breast milk, and facilities for mothers to breastfeed.**

- » 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.
- » Special occasions like birthday parties are in line with the service's policy on healthy eating.

See **Regulation 27**.

<sup>4</sup> In practice, this means that, if a child attends a sessional service and has not had a breakfast (morning session), or lunch (afternoon session), a breakfast or a lunch is provided, in addition to the regular snack.

# Section 2

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## 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.<sup>5</sup>
- » 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.

**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.<sup>6</sup>

**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 [Waterbeads](#) 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.

<sup>5</sup> PIF is managed in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's [Guidance Note no. 22](#).

<sup>6</sup> Examples of other [choking risks](#)



## 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

- » 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.**

- » 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](#) used during meal and snack times conform to safety standards.
- » Equipment used during meal and 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 mealtimes.
  - Children are seated at tables that are between waist and mid- chest level and allow the seated child's feet to rest on a firm surface.
  - For each child over the age of 1 year, the service provides chairs with a back and a seating height that allows the child to sit with their feet on the floor or a footrest.
  - All furniture and eating utensils provided by the service make it possible for the children to eat at their best skill level.
  - Food utensils and equipment, including furniture, are adapted if necessary to meet the developmental and physical needs of individual children.

## **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.

## **Indoor and outdoor equipment**

- » Furniture, toys and equipment on the premises conform to CE or BS/EN safety standards, as applicable.
- » Daily inspection of indoor and outdoor 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.
- » [Shock-absorbing surfaces](#) are installed in fall zones, as recommended by the manufacturer, for the fall height of the play equipment. Shock absorbing surfaces can be grass or another natural product, if appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children, and the type and location of the play equipment.

- » Equipment, materials and furnishings are sturdy and 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
  - lack of shock-absorbing surfaces (which can be grass or another natural product) and fall zones under and around climbable equipment
  - insufficient spacing between equipment
  - components that can pinch, cut or crush skin and flesh.
- » Equipment materials and furnishings are free from:
  - splinters
  - protruding nails, bolts, or other components that could entangle clothing or snag skin
  - rusty parts.
- » Natural materials such as branches, shells, rocks, pinecones, leaves, 'free and found' materials used in sensorial play, are suitable to the age and stage of development of the children and are non-toxic.
- » 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.**

- » Sandboxes in the outdoors are covered with a lid or other covering when they are not in use.
- » Sand play area covers are properly secured when they are lifted or moved to allow children to play in the sandbox.
- » Sand play areas are separated from landing areas for slides or other equipment.

## **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. 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.

## **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. Outings

### **Outings Policy (if children attending the service are brought on such outings)**

- » There is an outings policy in place
- » There is evidence of the outings 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 outings policy.
- » Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the outings policy.
- » Relevant staff have received training on the outings policy.

See **Regulation 10**.

## 10. 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**.

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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**.

## 13. 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,
- in services where sleeping children or children with additional needs are catered for.

- » 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 and/or re-enters.

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 need 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 [First Aid Responder \(FAR\)](#) Education and Training Standard established by the [Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council \(PHECC\)](#) is recognised by [Tusla](#) as being inclusive of content and instruction relating to first aid for children.<sup>71</sup>

- » The number of people trained in first aid for children (FAR) 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 (FAR) is available to the children while the service is in operation.
- » At least one person trained in first aid (FAR) is available to the children when on [outings](#).
- » A list of people trained in first aid (FAR) is available.
- » In-date certification for each trained FAR is available.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to FAR, the following PHECC approved first aid certificates meet the occupational first aid standards:  
A. Emergency First Responder, B. Medical Technician Paramedic, C. Advanced Paramedic qualification.

### **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	26 - 50 people <sup>8</sup>
Adhesive plasters	20	20	20	40
Sterile eye pads (No.16 – bandage attached)	2	2	2	4
Individually wrapped triangular bandages	2	3	6	6
Safety pins	6	6	6	6
Individually wrapped sterile, unmedicated wound dressings Medium (No. 8) 10 x 8 cm)	1	2	2	4
Individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings Large (No. 9) 13 x 9 cm)	1	2	6	8
Individually wrapped sterile, unmedicated wound dressings Extra-large (No. 3) 28 x 17.5 cm)	1	2	3	4
Individually wrapped disinfectant wipes	10	10	20	40
Paramedic shears	1	1	1	1
Examination gloves (pairs)	3	5	10	10
Sterile water where there is no clear running water <sup>9</sup>	2 x 20mls	1 x 500mls	2 x 500mls	2 x 500mls
Pocket face mask	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing <sup>10</sup> - small (10 x 10 cm)	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing - large	1	1	1	1
Crepe bandage (7cm)	1	1	2	3

<sup>8</sup> If more than 50 people are involved, supplies should be increased accordingly.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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 in the following areas and situations:
  - on each floor of each building used by children;
  - nearby and accessible to outdoor play areas;
  - on outings;
  - in any vehicle used to transport 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: climbing trees, swimming, bonfires, ponds, water tables, sensory play activities.**

- » Supervision is appropriate at all times, including during:
  - a. indoor activities,
  - b. outdoor activities,
  - c. meal times,
  - d. [outings](#) (where undertaken),
  - e. sleep time,
  - f. toileting and nappy changing,
  - g. 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, indoors and outdoors, 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. insurance for [outings](#) undertaken as part of the service provision,
  - e. motor insurance cover for vehicles used by the service to transport children,
  - f. 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.
- » Any vehicle used to transport children is appropriately insured for the purpose. Details of all relevant vehicle insurance policies and certificates are kept by the service.

# Section 2

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## 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

- » A wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate equipment is available indoors and outdoors<sup>11</sup> for children throughout the day.
- » 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.
- » Natural materials are accessible to the children.

**Examples: twigs, leaves, treasure basket, stones, shells.**

See **Regulation 19**.

### 3. Equipment and materials are inclusive

- » The materials, equipment and toys support and reflect the identity of children who are attending the service, their families and also the wider community.
- » Children with additional needs see themselves represented in the materials and the environment.

<sup>11</sup> Where the outdoor area is part of the premises.

- » 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.
- » Furnishings, equipment and materials, where required, allow children with additional needs to participate fully in the service.
- » If the service provides outdoor play equipment and materials, they are accessible to each child and are of suitable design and size for early years children.

See **Regulation 19**.

## **4. Furniture and equipment**

- » Furniture and equipment meet the individual needs of all children.
- » Furniture is durable and child-sized, or adapted for children's use.

**Example: low level shelving holds and displays children's toys and equipment.**

- » There are enough child-sized chairs and tables to allow flexible arrangements for groups of children to play and eat together.
- » 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:
  - a. Clean,
  - b. in good condition,
  - c. regularly checked for damage and wear and tear, and
  - d. 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:

- a. passageways are free of obstacles,
  - b. electrical sockets are safe,
  - c. floor coverings are secured,
  - d. floor coverings are non-slip,
  - e. choking hazards are removed,
  - f. safety devices are used on windows and doors (including visibility strips at a child's height),
  - g. no trailing flexes are in children's reach,
  - h. safety glass is installed, particularly in areas of low-level glazing and is clearly marked as such (BS6206),
  - i. appropriate safety symbols are in place as appropriate,
  - j. All areas, both indoors and outdoors, are free from glass, rubbish, sharp or hazardous items, and visible debris, and are in a clean condition.
- » The physical layout of the service is arranged so that there is appropriate visibility in the inside and outside areas. This includes the nappy changing and toileting areas used by children, while keeping in mind children's need for privacy when using these areas.
  - » Please refer to Tusla's Guidance document ['When the roof is the sky'](#) if the service is operating outdoors.

See **Regulation 23**.

#### **4. Storage**

- » The service has enough safe and appropriate storage space for play equipment when not in use.
- » Storage space for equipment not in use is separate from the early years room floor space and is inaccessible to children.
- » Equipment is stored safely and in an organised and hygienic way.
- » Therapeutic and specially adapted equipment is securely stored and inaccessible to children when it is not being used.

#### **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.

- » Lighting through windows or from light fixtures is controlled to maintain a subdued level suitable for the sleeping or resting areas, while also allowing sufficient lighting for sleeping children to be monitored. (Natural light in a sleep room is desirable but not a requirement. It can be supplemented by artificial lighting as necessary).

**Examples: blinds to subdue natural light, dimmer switches to control artificial light.**

- » 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 of 16 - 20°C in areas where babies under 12 months are sleeping, and all other areas are 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.
- » 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 disposal 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.
- » 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.
- » If trainer seats are used, they are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use and 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.<sup>12</sup>

See Tusla's Guidance document - '[When the roof is the sky](#)' for information on suitable sanitary facilities in an outdoor service.

<sup>12</sup> There is no requirement for separate boys and girls' toilets in an Early Years Service.

### **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 hot water. The hot 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 waste water used in cleaning the service.

### **Nappy changing**

- » 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, 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 is available as follows:

Type of Service	Clear Floor Space Requirement per Child
Full Day Pre-school Services	0 - 1 year: 3.5 square metres clear floor space per child. 1 - 2 years: 2.8 square metres clear floor space per child. 2 - 3 years: 2.35 square metres clear floor space per child. 3 - 6 years: 2.3 square metres clear floor space per child.
Part-Time Pre-school Services	0 - 1 year: 3.5 square metres clear floor space per child. 1 - 2 years: 2.8 square metres clear floor space per child. 2 - 3 years: 2.35 square metres clear floor space per child. 3 - 6 years: 2.3 square metres clear floor space per child.
<a href="#">Sessional Pre-School Service</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space per child for the duration of the Sessional Service. When the sessional service is finished, the Full or Part-Time space requirement applies (2.35 or 2.3 square metres depending on the children's ages).</li></ul> A minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space per child for the duration of the Drop in Service.
Drop in Preschool Service	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please note space requirements may not be applicable in an outdoor service.</li></ul>	

## **2. Maximum number**

- » The number of children accommodated in any one room at any time in a Full Day Care Service or Part-Time Day Care Service does not negatively impact on the children's wellbeing.
- » The number of children in a room at any time is monitored on an ongoing basis.

## **3. Mixed age groups**

- » Where children of different ages are cared for in one room, the space requirement is calculated based on each child's age and their length of stay in the service.

See examples in '[clear floor space](#)' in the Explanatory notes.

# Section 3

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## 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 <b>stops</b> 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 <b>and</b> 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;	2 years from the date on which the child <b>stops</b> attending the service.

Regulation	Document	Retention Period
	» any accident, injury or incident involving an early years child attending.	
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 <b>stops</b> 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.
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](http://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 preschool 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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 [registered providers](#) 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.

[Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement: A Guide for Early Years Services in Ireland](#) provides support and guidance for early years services in developing their Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Please also refer to specific guidance for early years services at <https://www.childsafeguardingelc.ie/>

#### **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 early years 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.**

**Example.**

Room	Type of service	Age of Children	Number of Children	Clear floor space required per child (square metres)	Total clear floor space required (square metres)
Baby Room	Sessional	0-1	2	3.5	7.0
	Full Day	1-2	1	2.8	2.8
Pre-School Room	Sessional	2-3	3	1.818	3.636
	Full Day	1-2	3	2.8	8.4
		2-3	6	2.35	14.1
		3-4*	7	1.818	12.726
Montessori Room	Sessional	3-6	3	1.818	19.998
	Full Day	3-6*	8		
<b>Total clear floor space required</b>			<b>33</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>68.66 square metres</b>

\*Each child is availing of a sessional programme scheme for 3 hours. This reverts to full day requirements of 2.3 square metres after 3.5 hours.

**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. This person must comply with the qualification and vetting requirements and be capable of running the service in the absence of the person in charge. A deputy person in charge is not an emergency person.

**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.

**Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme**

The Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) is a free, universal two-year preschool programme available to all children within the eligible age range funded by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). It provides children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. The programme is provided for 3 hours per day, 5 days per week over 38 weeks per year (or 182 days which can be found on the provider's ECCE calendar), and the programme year runs from 1st September to 30th June each year.

The programme is free and available to all children who have turned 2 years and 8 months of age by 31st August and must not be older than 5 years and 6 months of age on or before 30th June, of the programme year.

Services taking part in the ECCE programme must provide an appropriate pre-school educational programme which adheres to the principles of Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework for children from birth up to the age of six years.

**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.

**First Aid Response (FAR):**

First Aid Response and First Aid Responder.

The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) has established the First Aid Response standard. It offers training to individuals and groups who require a first aid skill set, including 'cardiac first response' – that is, providing first aid to someone having a heart attack or other heart-related issue. The [PHECC standard](#) is designed to meet first aid and basic life support requirements that a person known as 'First Aid responder' may need in emergency circumstances.

Tusla recognises PHECC's First Aid Response Education and Training Standard **when** delivered by a training provider approved by PHECC. It sees it as meeting the required standard for compliance with the regulatory requirements in Early Years registered services. All successful course participants are given joint PHECC/Recognised Institution FAR certificates. The certificate expires after two years and must be renewed to ensure the person has in-date FAR certification.

To meet the regulatory requirement for Regulation 25, there must be at least one person who is always FAR certified (First Aid Response) available to the children. The number of people trained in FAR and available for first aid response is based on the service's [risk assessments](#), including the size of the service and the hazards identified. Where a service provides evidence of a person certified in FAR and being available to the children at all times, the regulatory requirement will be deemed to be met.

**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.

**Growbags:**

Please also refer to Tusla's [guidance on safe sleep](#) for the early years sector.

Wearable sleeping bags for infants and small children. Growbags are suitable for non-ambulant sleeping children in a cot provided bags are:

- » the correct size for the children wearing them, and
- » worn in line with their design – that is, arms through the armholes and head out the head holes.

Growbags come in varying thicknesses for different seasons. If growbags are used, they must be of suitable tog weight to keep a child warm while sleeping without overheating. Manufacturers' instructions must be followed. If a baby sleeping/grow bag is used, it is without a hood and the right size around the neck so the baby will not slip down inside the bag. They should not be used once a child is ambulant- that is- they begin walking about the cot. Always check the [CCPC's website](#) to ensure specific growbags are not on their recall lists.

**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.

### Mixed Age Groups:

The adult:child ratio requirements are set out in Schedule 6 of the 2016 Regulations. The ratios are the minimum number of appropriately qualified adults required to supervise, care for and work directly with the children in the service. It is the responsibility of the [registered provider](#) to ensure that sufficient and appropriately qualified adults are working directly with the children in the service at all times.

The ages of the children, their stage of development, their particular needs and the carrying out of some activities may necessitate higher numbers of adults working directly with the children – for example, on [outings](#) further to a [risk assessment](#). A single ratio is not applied uniformly where mixed aged ranges are accommodated in the one room; instead the requirement for each age range is calculated.

### Example:

Room	Type of service	Age of Children (years)	Number of Children	Adult: child ratio	Adults required
Baby Room	Sessional	0-1	2	1:3	0.6
	Full Day	1-2	1	1:5	0.2
<b>Total for baby room</b>			3		<b>0.8 = (1 adult)</b>
Pre-School Room	Sessional	2-3	3	1:11	0.27
	Full Day	1-2	3	1:5	0.6
		2-3	6	1:6	1.0
		3-4	4	1:8	0.5
<b>Total for Pre-School Room</b>			16		<b>2.37 = (3 adults)</b>
Montessori Room	Sessional	3-6	11	1:11	1.0
	Full Day*	3-6	8	1:8	1.0
<b>Total for Montessori Room</b>			11		<b>2.0 = (2 adults)</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>		<b>5.17 = (6 adults)</b>

\*If the 8 children attending on a full day care basis avail of the ECCE/Sessional programme (up to 3.5 hours), the adult:child ratio of 1:11 will apply to each child for the duration of the 3.5 hour session, after which time the ratios return to 1:8.

**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/](http://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](mailto: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.

**Open Door Policy:** A ‘no appointment necessary’ policy to encourage good communication. An open-door policy, in general, means that an appointment is not needed to visit the service. The children’s [parents and guardians](#) can call in at any time while the service is operating. An open-door policy is a matter and decision of the [registered provider](#).

**Outdoor Service:** services operating wholly or substantially outdoors and where the outdoor area reflects the natural environment. Please refer to Tusla’s guidance document [‘When the roof is the sky’](#) for more information and advice on outdoor services.

**Outing:** Occasions where children attending the service are under the control of the service but not on the [premises](#).

**Outings – Adult:child ratio.** The adult:child ratio is determined for each outing based on a [risk assessment](#). The following considerations must be determined:

- » Potential [risks](#) and [hazards](#) associated with the outing.
- » The number of adults required to adequately maintain the supervision and safety of all early years children.
- » Additional needs of children.
- » Public accessibility, if applicable.
- » Management of all risks identified before the outing.
- » All relevant policies and procedures in the service.
- » Insurance requirements.

**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 staff:** Paid and unpaid [staff](#), [contractors](#), or any person who needs to have information about the service appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

**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 Level 5 or higher on the NFQ, or a comparable equivalent award.

This can include programmes offered by:

- » private and public providers; and
- » the further and higher education sector.

Transition Year students taking part in an approved Transition Year in a Department of Education and Skills approved secondary school are also considered students.

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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