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TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

**Children's Services
Regulation**

Early Years Inspectorate

Choosing an early years service



What is a preschool service?

A preschool service means any preschool, playgroup, day nursery, crèche, day care or any similar service that cares for children who are yet attending a recognised* school.

What are the different types of early years services?

Childminding Service: One person cares for children single-handedly in the childminder's own home 2 hours or more per day.

Sessional pre-school service: offers a planned programme for not more than 3.5 hours a session.

Part-time day care service: offers a structured day care service for more than 3.5 hours but less than 5 hours a day.

Full day care service: offers a structured day care service for more than 5 hours a day.

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

Temporary pre-school service: offers day care only on a temporary basis. Examples include once off events such as a conference or a sports event.

Overnight pre-school service: pre-school children are taken care of for more than 2 hours between the hours of 7pm and 6am.

A childminder caring for a relative's children, caring for children from the same family or caring for up to 3 children from different families is not required to register with Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

* As defined by the Education Act 1998

What you need to know before choosing an early years service.

- Tusla has more than 4,300 early years services in Ireland on its register.
- Tusla has more than 950 school age services on its register.
- Early years services must be approved by Tusla before they can be registered and begin operating.

Where can I find a Tusla registered service?

To find a list of Tusla registered services in your area, visit:

www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-providers/register-of-early-years-services-by-county

For a list of services that Tusla have removed from the register visit:

www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-providers/early-years-enforcement

The list can be found under 'Enforcement and Prosecutions'.

Are Tusla registered early years services inspected?

Yes. All Tusla registered early years services are inspected by Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate.

Inspections are nearly always unannounced (no advance notice is given). Each service receives a report following the inspection. This report is published.

Where can I get an inspection report?

Yes. You can ask your service for a copy of its Tusla inspection reports, or you can view the reports on the Tusla website here:

www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/creche-inspection-reports

Quick Checklist

This quick checklist might help you when you are planning and choosing your childcare service.

Making a Start

- ☐ I know the type of service I need
- ☐ The service is registered with Tusla
- ☐ The last Inspection report is available (Details overleaf of how to get an inspection report)
- ☐ I have read Tusla leaflet on: What to expect from an early years service
- ☐ I have read the parents/guardians Early Years page on Tusla website

Visiting the Service

- ☐ I have an appointment to visit the service
- ☐ I have prepared a list of questions
- ☐ I will ask to see the service

Is it a quality service?

- ☐ Is the service safe for my child?
- ☐ Is the service well managed?
- ☐ Is the service a happy, joyful place for my child to play, learn and develop?
- ☐ Are there policies and procedures available?
- ☐ Is there information about the service available for parents?

Other Issues

- ☐ I will find out about fees, location, opening hours, flexible arrangements, other parents experiences, government schemes.

Visit the service

Before you visit the service make an appointment as this will ensure the manager has time to talk with you and show you the service.*

Prepare a list of questions

There are questions set out in the leaflet: What to expect from an early years service, which may be helpful and You may have additional questions of your own.

Make a list of these before you visit the service as it can be quiet easy to forget these important questions once you are in the service.

Information for parents

Is there a parent's handbook or information available online about the service?

A full list of policies, procedures and statements are available at: www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/sample-policies-and-templates

Do the policies and procedures include how;

- healthy eating is promoted
- outdoor play is supported
- suitable safe sleep facilities are provided
- medication is safely administered and stored
- the spread of Infection is prevented
- safety risks to children are identified, minimised or eliminated.
- positive behaviour is promoted and challenging behaviour supported
- your child is settled into the service and prepared for transition to primary school
- complaints from parents/guardians are received and managed

* Restrictions may apply during covid 19 pandemic

Further Information

Can parents/guardians give feedback on their child's early years service to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate?

Yes we welcome feedback from parents/guardians on early years services. Feedback helps inform the inspection process and supports improvement in service provision.

You can do this by completing our feedback form online:
www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/parents-guardians/parents-feedback and email it to:
parents.feedback@tusla.ie

Who do I contact if I have a concern about a Tusla registered early years service?

If you are concerned about the quality of an early years service, you should first speak to the staff/manager or childminder.

If your concern cannot be resolved with the service, you can contact the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by:

Telephone: 061 440600

Email: feedback.concerns@tusla.ie

Web: download the 'concerns form' on the Tusla website at:
www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/parents-guardians/parents-feedback

This form can be emailed to:
feedback.concerns@tusla.ie

or posted to:
**Tusla, Feedback and Concerns Team,
Early Years Inspectorate, 2nd Floor,
Estuary House, Henry Str., Limerick.**



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Contact the Tusla

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Email: parents.feedback@tusla.ie

Web: www.tusla.ie