



# Early Years Inspectorate

## Regulatory Notice

QMS reference	EYI-RN12.6
Version	V1.0
Issued:	March 2026
Title:	Qualifications in Pre School Services
Ref:	02/2026

## 1. Background

Each employee and a registered provider working directly with children in a Pre-school Service must hold either:

- A minimum of a Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or
- A qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent to the above.

One exemption to this is a person employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Level 7. Please refer to DCDE [AIM Policy and Rules](#) for further details.

*Note: The qualification requirement does not apply to staff who exclusively work with children attending a School age Service, or to staff who do not work directly with children.*

Different training requirements apply to registered childminders under the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Childminding Services\) Regulations 2024](#)

## 2. Legislation

**Regulation 9 (4) of The [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#)** governs qualifications for staff working in Pre-school Services.

## 3. Current Position

Guidance in relation to staff qualifications in Pre-school Services is outlined in the Tusla EYI Quality and Regulatory Framework [Early Years Quality and Regulatory Framework Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#).

Due to an increase in overseas recruitment, there are now a range of documents in various languages available in Pre-school services in relation to proof of qualification of staff. Therefore, there is a requirement to provide additional clarity to Registered Providers on what documentation is acceptable and in what format to demonstrate compliance with Regulation 9 (4).

## 4. Established Position Effective 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026

The onus is on the Registered Provider to prove that the person employed to work directly with children is qualified in line with regulatory requirements.

Staff working directly with children, including those staff that are supernumerary (with the exception of persons on employment support programmes or students on placement) are required at minimum to have completed a Level 5 Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

**The following are the only documents acceptable as proof of qualification:**

- A certificate /degree parchment with the full title of qualification that is on the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality (DCDE) [recognised list of qualifications](#) in English/Latin or Irish. Any certificate not originally in English/Latin or Irish must be accompanied by a certified translation to English or Irish. Certificates originally in Latin should be accompanied by a transcript from the university.

*Note: Where a certificate is in the language of the country of origin and this exact qualification is clearly identifiable on the [DCDE list](#) in the language of origin this is accepted.*

- Final transcripts with the full title of the qualification. If this is in a language other than English/Irish, a certified translation is required. Components of certificates will not be acceptable.
- A [diploma supplement](#) provided by an educational institution/ awarding body.
- A record of awarded qualifications (e.g. QQI Final Statement of Results) will be accepted until an individual has received their certificate. A Provisional Statement of Results will not be accepted.
- If a qualification is not already included in the [DCDE list](#) of recognised qualifications, a letter of qualification recognition from the DCDE must accompany proof of qualification. While some letters of recognition have no end-date, some are temporary and specify a date when their period of validity ends.
- In some countries there may be a delay in the issuing of the certificate of qualification. An official receipt of payment for the issuing of the certificate will be sufficient evidence to demonstrate successful completion of the education/training programme, provided it is clear from the receipt that the qualification is on the [DCDE list](#) of qualifications and the individual provides evidence of transcripts.
- Where a person is undertaking a Level 8 qualification and can demonstrate through a letter of qualification recognition from the DCDE that the course completed to date is equivalent to at least a Major Award at Level 5 this will be acceptable to meet the requirements of Regulation 9(4).

**Please note:**

- Regulation 9(4) specifies that “each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a Level 5 Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the NFQ or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent”. Therefore, only appropriately qualified adults can be employed to work directly with children in a Pre-school Service.
- Only appropriately qualified adults (i.e. those that satisfy the requirements set out in this Notice) will be considered when assessing compliance with Regulation 11: Staffing Levels in respect to adult child: ratios.

## 5. Translation of documents

Any documents related to proof of qualification that are not originally in Latin, English or Irish must be accompanied with a certified translation<sup>1</sup>. Certificates/parchments originally in Latin should be accompanied by a transcript from the university. Dual language certificates may be accepted where proof of qualification is clearly stated in English. All translated records must be accompanied by the original document from the country of origin.

The provider must satisfy themselves that evidence is provided of the qualification requirement of “*at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications*” or “*a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.*”

**Note: Where a certificate is in the language of the country of origin and this exact qualification is clearly identifiable on the DCDE list in the language of origin this can be accepted.**

## 6. Compliance

Non-adherence to this notice will result in a finding of non-compliance with Regulation 9(4) and potential non-compliance with Regulation 11 being recorded in an inspection report. Registered providers will be afforded the right of reply in line with the established inspection process. Non-adherence to this Regulatory Notice may result in the issuance of an Improvement or Immediate action Notice if it is deemed that the issue will or is likely to pose a risk of harm to a child.

Further enforcement action may also be applied specific to the level and extent of non-adherence in each individual case. Please refer to Tusla’s [Regulatory Enforcement Policy](#) for more information.

## 7. Support

Any queries regarding this Notice can be submitted to [rpdd@tusla.ie](mailto:rpdd@tusla.ie)

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<sup>1</sup> A certified translation comes with a signed statement saying the document has been translated appropriately, is signed by the translator with full contact details and is stamped. Please refer to <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/how-to-make-a-certified-translation-of-a-document/>