

Early Years Inspectorate updates Spring 2026



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1. Quality and Regulatory Framework



The Early Years Inspectorate's Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) is designed to support registered early years services by clearly setting out the core regulatory requirements. It brings together evidence-based national and international research, along with best practice in early years care and education.

There are 3 versions of the QRF available. These are:

- the [Full Day Care Service and Part-time Day Care Service QRF](#)
- the [Sessional QRF](#)
- the Drop- in QRF (please note the Drop-in QRF is currently being updated and will be published shortly).

The QRF aims to support compliance with the regulations and to enhance the safety, quality, and overall experience of care for children.

The framework was updated in 2026 to reflect recent developments in policy and practice. A summary of the latest changes can be found on page 4 of each of the documents.

We appreciate that services like to have a hard copy of the Quality and Regulatory Framework, and Version 1 was made available in print and online, however we are not printing any hard copies of version 2 for a couple of reasons:

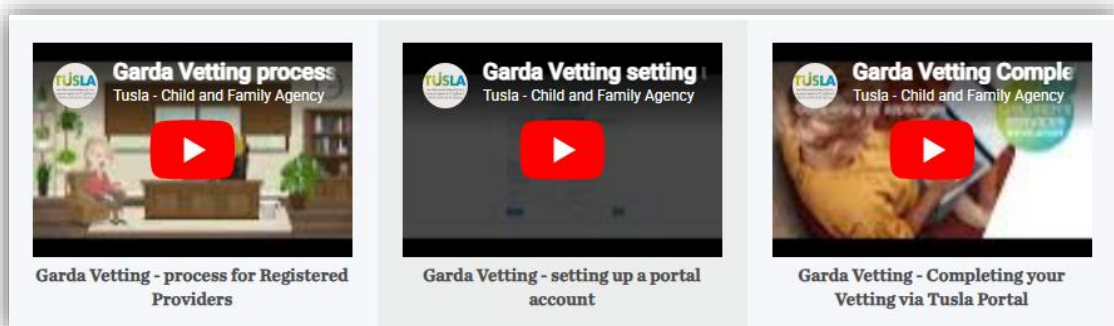
- There are multiple hyperlinks which will only work when the document is accessed online.
- The document may require further updates during 2026 and so for now we are recommending that it is accessed on our website so that the most up to date version is being read by the sector.

2. Vetting

There have been a number of queries raised in relation to both Garda Vetting and International Police Vetting. To address the queries, we are directing you to the information and guidance currently available on the Inspectorate's [website](#) and providing this reminder of the key requirements.

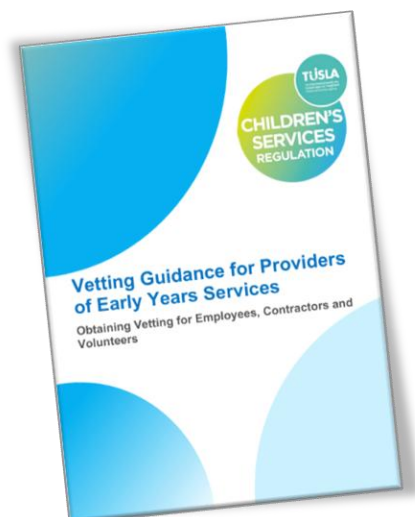
- The staff members, contractors and unpaid workers in your service that require Garda and Police vetting (where required) are those whose role consists mainly of having necessary and regular access to or contact with children.
- Garda Vetting Disclosure Documents are valid for 3 years from the date of issue for all persons undertaking relevant work in Early Years Services. Re-vetting should be commenced at least 12 weeks in advance of your vetting expiry date to ensure your vetting doesn't lapse.
- Garda Vetting and Police Vetting (where required) is undertaken and is completed before a person is appointed or assigned to the service
- Garda Vetting cannot be transferred from a previous employer/organisation.
- Garda Vetting obtained by an educational establishment for a student on placement will be accepted, however only for the hours of the student's placement, in line with [our guidance](#) document on vetting for students. This document also addresses the queries around transition year students.
- Police Vetting (where required) is undertaken by the individual and given to the employer.
- There are a 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.
- Police Vetting documentation not in English/Irish must be translated by a certified translator and be available in the service.

We have published [three short guidance videos](#) to support Registered Providers with their Garda Vetting applications.



Vetting of Staff in Early Years Services: Obtaining Vetting for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

We have published a [new document](#) to provide information and guidance to Registered Providers on vetting requirements for staff members/employees (including unpaid workers/volunteers and contactors) in regulated Early Years Services

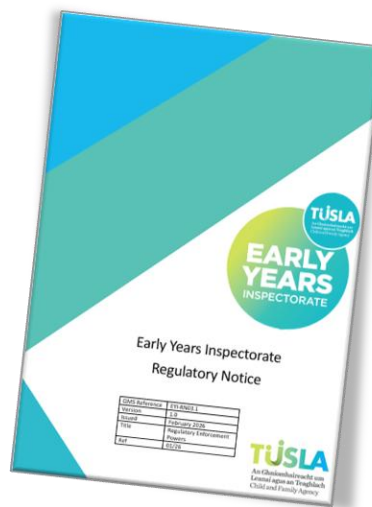


3. Regulatory Notices

The following [regulatory notices](#) have been recently published and are available on the website



[Qualifications in pre-school services](#)



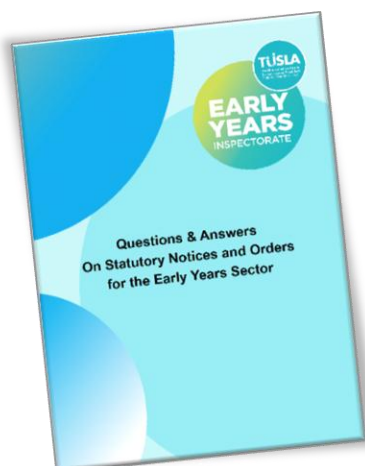
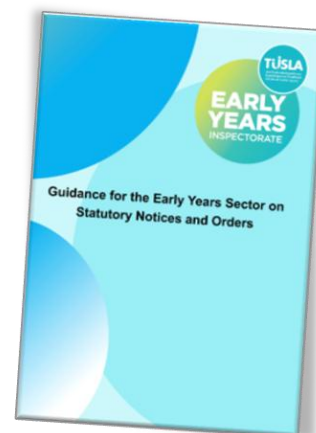
[Regulatory Enforcement Powers](#)

4. Enforcement powers

We have published [information on our website](#), including a new **webinar for the sector** relating to the new enforcement powers.

Guidance for the Early Years Sector on Statutory Notices and Orders [New Enforcement Powers](#)

This document is intended to provide information and guidance to Registered Providers of Early Years Services (including childminders), and management and staff in Early Years Services on Statutory Notices and Orders.



Q & A for the Early Years Sector on Statutory Notices and Orders [New Enforcement Powers](#)

This document is designed to provide information to all providers, parents and guardians regarding expanding powers within the Early Years Inspectorate. It should be read in conjunction with the information and resources available on the Early Years Inspectorate Enforcement [webpage](#).

5. New Applications

2026 New Applications Timeframes

Fully completed applications (which includes the submission of all required documentation) for proposed new services that are submitted before 01st June 2026 will be approved for opening in September 2026. Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time for a September opening date. All new applications for pre-school settings currently require a pre-registration inspection and time taken to complete same. This should be factored into your preparation.

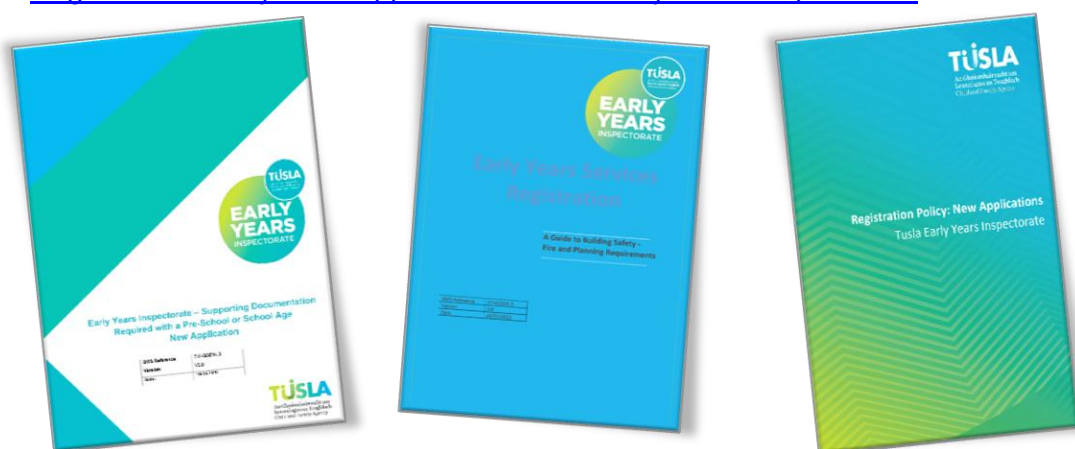
New Registration Portal

We have developed a new online portal for submitting all new registration applications for **pre-school, school age, and childminding services**.

All applications must be submitted through this [new portal](#). Applications sent through previous channels will no longer be accepted.

Before you apply – click on links below to see what supporting documentation is required for your **new pre-school or school age application**:

- [New Registrations - Supporting documentation](#)
- [Fire and Planning Requirements for Early Years Services](#)
- [Registration Policy: New Applications Tusla Early Years Inspectorate](#)



6. Changes in Circumstances

2026 New CIC Timeframes

Change in Circumstances applications (which includes the submission of all required documentation) that are submitted before 01st July 2026 will be approved for September 2026. Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time.

All applications must be submitted via the [Change in Circumstance and Registration Renewal Portal](#).

The Inspectorate has introduced a simpler and more secure way for you to submit Change in Circumstance applications. From February 2026 these applications have moved from email submission to the Tusla Change in Circumstance and Registration Renewal Portal (available here: [Tusla Portal](#)), in line with the existing registration renewal process. A range of [guidance materials](#) have been published to support providers

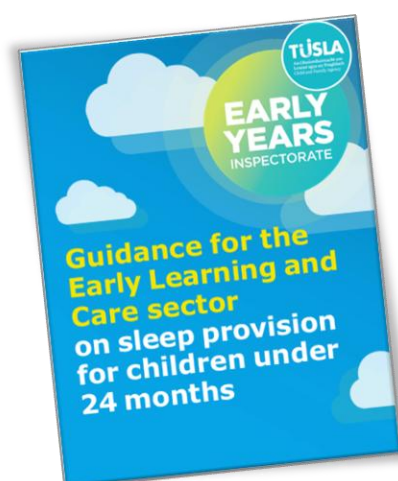


7. School Age Inspection

Ahead of updated regulations for school age services the Inspectorate will commence inspection of an increased number of services. More information can be found on our [website](#) which will be updated regularly.

8. Sleep guidance updated

Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months has been updated. This can be accessed on the [provider resources page](#).

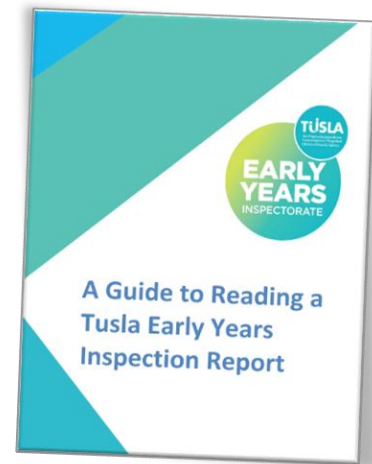


9. Policy Guidance Documents

Updated Policy Guidance Documents for the Early Years Sector have now been published on our [website](#).

10. Reading an Inspection Report

The Inspectorate has updated [A Guide to Reading an Early Years Inspection Report](#) to assist parents/ guardians understanding of how reports are structured and where to find specific information. The update reflects the new Inspection Report template and the new enforcement powers. This would be good to share with parents



11. Sector Survey

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate will be inviting people who work in the Early Years Sector to take part in a short survey about our engagement strategies.

We want to better understand how well our information and guidance are supporting you, and how confident you feel in accessing resources and assistance through the Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate website. We are also interested in identifying any gaps in the supports currently available.

Any queries or feedback in relation to any of the information provided in this Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate Spring update can be sent to RPDD@Tusla.ie