



Early Years Inspectorate

Inspections and Findings
COVID-19

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Welcome



Inspection Tool for Early Years Services: F09
Inspections

Service Name:

Tusla number:

Eibhlin O'Leary Head of Inspection and Assessment

This evening..

- Share our learnings
- Services
 - > 630 Services COVID-19 Notification
- COVID-19
 - Unique Regulatory Challenge
 - Positives
 - Learning

This evening ..

- Context
- Inspections during COVID-19
- Findings from Inspections
- Resources and Supports
- Points to note
 - Service Specific issues
 - Question in Chat box

Why inspect early years services?

- Raising Standards and Compliance
- Families need Quality Childcare
- Families and State need independent assurance
- Failure in Childcare is not acceptable – even small failures
- Quality Childcare supports an Economy
- Quality Regulation supports a level playing field



Our Legal Responsibility

PART 12

Amendment of Child Care Act 1991

58H.

The Agency shall cause to be visited from time to time each prescribed early years service in order to ensure that the person carrying on the service is complying with this Part.



Number 40 of 2013

CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY ACT 2013

CONTENTS

Our Legal Responsibility

Inspection

- 34. (1) The Agency shall, following an inspection by an authorised person of a pre-school service, furnish a report in writing to the registered provider of the outcome of the inspection.
- (2) Subject to paragraph (1), the Agency shall take such steps as are necessary to enforce these Regulations in relation to the pre-school service concerned.

Enforcement and execution

- 35. These Regulations shall be enforced and executed by the Agency.



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

S.I. No. 221 of 2016

CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) REGULATIONS
2016

What is your legal responsibility?

PART 12

Amendment of Child Care Act 1991

58G.

*It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to **take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children** attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.*



Number 40 of 2013

CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY ACT 2013

CONTENTS



Your job ...



For your services to be safe and happy places for children to play, learn and develop



Child focused all day everyday

A 3D illustration of interlocking puzzle pieces. One piece is light blue and has the word 'Regulations' written on it in red. Another piece is red and has the word 'Compliance' written on it in white. The background is a solid blue color.

Regulations

Compliance

Inspections in Covid-19

Elaine Murphy
Lead Inspection & Registration Manager



COVID-19 and Inspections

What to expect from an Inspection during COVID-19?

Revised methodology - public health guidance to ensure the safety of your staff/children & our inspectorate team

- **Step one:** Phone/email contact by the Early Years Inspector to the RP re completion of "Pre-Inspection Documentation Request" & discussion re inspection process.
- **Step two:** Early Years Inspectors will review initial submissions and liaise with registered providers.
- **Step three:** The on-site inspection is conducted. Strict physical distancing and appropriate PPE. A feedback meeting will take place remotely or on-site if agreed by both parties.
- **Step four:** The Early Years Inspector will draft an inspection report and issue as per standard protocol.

New Inspection Methodology

- Increased focus on health & safety controls
- Our Inspectors
 - FFP2 masks
 - Physical distancing
 - Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Introduction of remote desktop review of documentation
- Reduced time on-site
 - Sampling of documentation
- Closing meeting – outdoor or remote where possible.
- Digital Regulatory Compliance meetings and Regulatory Enforcement meetings

Main Regulations being examined at this time

- **9(2)** New staff only (Staff References and Vetting etc)
- **9(7)**- Updated policies, staff training / supervision
- **10**- Policies: risk management and infection control.
- **11**- Staffing Levels
- **19**- Specific focus on supporting relationships and physical and material environment.
- **23**- Infection control, general safety, safe sleep.

Bespoke Inspections

or

Amend Inspections

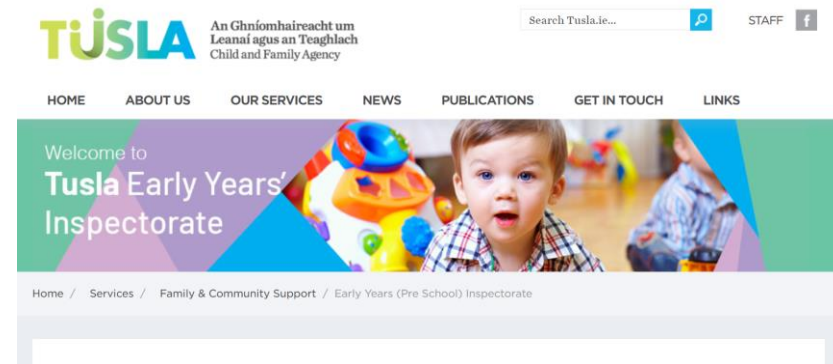
Tusla reserves the right to look at other regulations or carryout bespoke inspections;

- Information received or issues identified onsite
- Any significant risks identified (risk to the child).
- Previous non-compliances - not addressed via CAPA or closed out.
- Feedback and concerns received (previously referred to as Unsolicited Information).

Inspection Process

- [Tusla Early Years COVID-19 Inspection protocol for registered providers](#)
- [Tusla Early Years Inspection Toolkit](#)
- [Pre-Inspection Documentation Request](#)

Inspections are constantly under review



Inspection Findings and Good Practice

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



Mary Redmond
Early Years Inspector
Dublin South

Positives identified during inspections

- Consistent message of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette – use of visual aids and cues for children.
- Long term benefits of enhanced infection control
- Maximisation of outdoor play; an increase in outdoor play in most services.
- Additional staffing;
 - staff are reporting that their work is less stressful
 - more 1:1 time with children
- Consistency of staffing – positive for Regulation 19 (Health, Welfare and Development) as well as Regulation 23 (Health & Safety) .
- Additional focus on training of staff.

Infection Control

Pods

- Mixing of staff across rooms/ pods (Relief /Breaks).
- Changing nature of pods over course of the day/ week.
- Difficulty in balancing family groups and children by age/ developmental stage
- Afterschool reopening – mixing of schools in pods
- Do what you have to do and do it well.

Infection Control

Hygiene Measures

- Nappy changing
- Cleaning Schedules – Indoor & Outdoor areas
- Cold water in wash hand basins / portable sinks
- Use of face cloths / baby wipes
- Effective system for sterilising mouthing toys and managing drinking utensils to prevent cross contamination.
- Children from different rooms sharing the same sleep space.
- Serving food directly onto the table

Infection Control

Mask Wearing

- We appreciate messaging has changed over the 12 months on mask wearing
- Message now - all staff wear a mask and remove as necessary – intimate care situations
- When undertaking paperwork, circulating through the building or at break time, masks should be worn.
- Public health colleagues have emphasised the importance for all staff to wear a mask
- Key message to bring home this evening

Infection Control

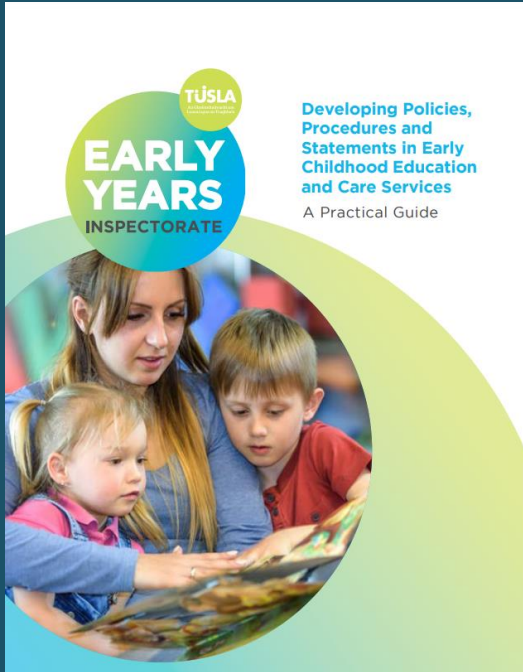
Staffing

- Staff moving between services
- Staff living and working together
- Staff mixing between rooms and pods
- Person in Charge/ relief staff/ ancillary staff in and out of rooms during the day
- Staff from different rooms having break together while not maintaining distancing
- Staff training – symptomatic children and staff
- Supervision of new exits – drop off and collection points

Key Learning from COVID-19 outbreaks.

- The importance of **wearing a mask** has been identified as a key factor in transmission rate, example of a student who wore mask for entire length of time in an early years service and tested negative when a positive case was identified in the service.
- Reviewing the **living and working arrangements of staff** to enable them to work together in a service.
- Co-operation of **staff and parents** in not attending if they are **symptomatic**.
- Review of **enhanced cleaning procedures** to ensure they are effective.
- Ensure **hand-washing** practices are maintained in addition to **physical distancing** and **respiratory etiquette**.
- **Do what you have to do and do it well**

Supports to Childcare Providers – COVID-19



Stella Murray
Inspection & Registration Manager

Supports to Childcare Providers

Early Years Inspectorate

The Early Years Inspectorate **COVID-19 Helpline**

- support and facilitate the safe reopening and operation during the COVID -19 period.
- point of direct contact for registered providers and staff in the early years sector to submit queries or concerns
- informs the inspectorate of the main areas of concern

COVID -19 Helpline

Name	Contact	Email	Region
Margaret Monahan	091 775823	Margaret.Monahan@tusla.ie	North west & Mid-West
Karina Cullen	087 6873904	karina.cullen@tusla.ie	Dublin South & Mid Leinster
Paula O'Keeffe	087 9115333	Paula.O'Keeffe@tusla.ie	South East & South West
Breda Hayes	087 1784593	breda.hayes7@tusla.ie	Dublin North & Dublin North East

The process of the COVID-19 Helpline

Administrative Staff

- Helpline by telephone and email
- Respond to queries
- Escalate for decision making or Inspector follow up where necessary
- Log queries
- Ensure all queries are responded to and closed out

Early Years Inspectors

- Respond to technical queries escalated to them by helpline staff
- Notify Managers of any significant matters that arise

Management

- Oversight of queries that are received. Liaise with Inspectors to ensure continuity of responses
- Keep up to date with latest public health advice
- Escalate matters where appropriate to the HSE or/ and the DCYA

Overview of queries received



Queries about pods, their size, formation and 'mixing of pods'



Cleaning agents, fogging devices, steamers.



Equipment and Toys.



Distance between two pods in a sleep room.



Sanitary Facilities & Hand Wash Basins, indoors and outdoors. Portable sinks.



Hand Sanitizer – alcohol content.



Food and Nutrition-children self-serving at mealtimes, and delivery of meals to services.



Transport, drop off and collections.

General Queries



Travel



Face coverings



Ventilation



Staff working
2 jobs



Fees, National
childcare scheme



UI/NOI

COVID-19 Supports

tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/update-for-early-years-service-providers-on-covid-19/

Tusla Early Years' Inspectorate



Home / Services / Early Years (Pre School) Inspectorate / Update for early years' service providers on COVID-19

Update for early years' service providers on COVID-19

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate has developed guidance for registered providers of early years services to support and facilitate the safe reopening and operation during the COVID-19 period.

The suite of documents includes:

Compliance Information for Early Years Services Operating during the Covid 19 pandemic

1. [Tusla Guidance for Early Years Services – Covid-19 \(Irish version\)](#)
2. [Tusla, Early Years Self-Assessment Checklist – Covid-19 \(Irish Version\)](#)
3. [Tusla, Early Years Notification Form – Covid-19](#)

Tusla Early Years Notification Form

COVID-19

Early Years Inspectorate COVID-19 Notification Form

Child Care Act (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
Part VIII, Article 31



Service Name:

Service Address:

TU number:

Date:

Please indicate the nature of the incident

Confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 for any child attending the service

☐

Confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 for any staff member

☐

Potential closure of a service

☐

Other relevant information

☐

Additional supports to Childcare Providers during COVID-19

- The First 5 “Guidance during Covid 19 website” is
 - <https://first5.gov.ie/guidance>
- Access to videos, webinars, information sheets, posters, tip sheets and frequently asked questions support guides.
- Links to support organisations such as
 - City/County Childcare committees,
 - National Voluntary Childcare Organisations (NCVOs),
 - Better Start, and
 - the Irish Language Organisation.

Conclusions

Not an easy time - Business Model

Take Home Messages

- Mask Wearing
- Minimise Mixing
 - Staff
 - Children
- COVID-19 Rules
 - Handwashing
 - Respiratory etiquette
 - Physical Distancing

‘Do what you have to do and do it well’

Discussion Q&A