



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education  
An Chigireacht  
Inspectorate



# Inspections in Early Learning and Care settings- Information leaflet for parents



**Tusla Early Years and  
Department of Education Inspectorates**

# Introduction to Early Years Inspections

Inspections of Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings are carried out by the Department of Education (DE) and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorates.

Inspections are undertaken to provide assurance to parents and the public that good standards of learning, care and safety are maintained in ELC settings.

There are similarities and differences in how ELC settings are inspected by each Inspectorate and this leaflet will provide you with information about this.

Both Inspectorates are committed to the provision of high quality and safe learning and care experiences for young children.

This leaflet provides information on the different types of inspections and other work carried out by both Inspectorates.



## Who does what?

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate ensures ELC settings are registered, and as the regulator has enforcement powers to ensure that settings comply with the Preschool Regulations (2016).

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate provides information on compliance with regulations and looks for responses from ELC settings to any issues raised during inspections.

The Department of Education Inspectorate has a statutory remit to evaluate the nature, range and appropriateness of early educational experiences of babies and young children in government funded ELC settings.

The Department of Education Inspectorate provides advice to help settings bring about improvement in education provision and provides an opportunity for ELC settings to respond to their inspection report detailing how they will do this.



## Tusla Early Years Inspections

When inspecting, both Inspectorates look for and note good quality and safe practice. They make note of any areas that need improving.

Both Inspectorates make inspection reports available to the public including parents.

Both Inspectorates provide information to the public, including parents on the quality and safety of education and care provision.



The inspector reviews all aspects of the service to ensure that:

- The service is well managed
- The safety, health, welfare and development of each child is supported
- The premises are safe and suitable.

Inspectors will collect and cross check information and evidence such as:

- What information the ELC setting provided when registering
- Documents required for regulatory compliance (for example, care and programme records and staff rosters)
- Information from discussions with managers and staff
- Observations of children's care, play and interactions
- Information about the premises and facilities.



# Department of Education Inspections

The Department of Education Inspectorate has two inspection models that focus on the quality of education provision. ELC settings are typically provided with 2 days notice of inspection.

## In an early years education inspection the inspector;

- Talks to and interacts with children
- Observes practice in learning environments
- Reviews learning environments indoors and outdoors
- Reviews and discusses available documentation related to children’s learning experiences.

## In a Follow Through Inspection the inspector;

- Verifies how the ELC setting has implemented the actions advised in the earlier inspection report.



# How we communicate with parents

Both Inspectorates provide information to parents about the work they do through their websites, which includes the following:

- Contact details to get in touch with us
- A register of ELC settings in each county
- Guides to inspection and information on choosing an ELC setting
- Tusla Early Years Inspectorate poster is displayed in the ELC setting during inspection
- The Department of Education Inspectorate provides online information for parents about quality ELC practice and inspection processes
- This information includes webinars for parents about quality in early education and resources for children about inspection, which parents may wish to access with their children.



# Further Information

More information on evaluation and inspection of ELC settings is available online

Department of Education Inspections

[gov.ie/en/organisation-information/818fa1-inspectorate/](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/818fa1-inspectorate/)

TUSLA Inspections

[tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/](https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/)

Parents can access Department of Education inspection reports at;

[gov.ie/en/school-reports/](https://www.gov.ie/en/school-reports/)

Parents can access Tusla inspection reports at;

[tusla.ie/services/preschoolservices/creche-inspection-reports/](https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschoolservices/creche-inspection-reports/)



[gov.ie/education](https://www.gov.ie/education)

[tusla.ie](https://www.tusla.ie)