



Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Purpose

The protection and welfare of the children in your service is paramount, and the children's safety and wellbeing is the priority. **As a registered provider, you must be committed to safeguarding the children in your care, and to providing a safe environment where they can play, learn and develop.** The scope of this regulation addresses the following:

General Safety

Safe Sleep

Administration of Medication

Management of Outings (where undertaken)

Infection Control

Risks Management

Accident and Incident Prevention

Fire Safety

Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

Roles and responsibilities

The registered provider and each person working in the service has a clear understanding of their own role and range of responsibilities in the service to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service. *See Regulations 9 and 29.* General Safety. The following points listed may not address all safety issues. New issues and hazards can emerge over time. Therefore, the registered provider must ensure that all aspects of their service are reviewed and assessed to ensure the safety of all the children attending.

Infant formula:

If staff heat up infant formula or breast milk, the milk is warmed using a bottle warmer or by standing the feed in a container of warm water, for no more than 15 minutes.

No milk or other formula foods are warmed in a microwave oven.

Choking hazards:

The following foods are not included in meals or offered as snacks: • whole nuts; and • popcorn.

- All fruit and vegetables must be quartered or halved. Examples: grapes, cherry tomatoes.
- Hazardous small parts that may become detached during normal use, (or that could break off if the equipment was treated roughly), and that present a choking, breathing, or swallowing hazard to a child, are always out of reach and are only used under supervision.



Examples: • strangulation hazards (straps, strings and cords); • flaking paint; • small items in a sensory table.

- The use of amber beads is prohibited. Children are not allowed to blow up balloons, suck on, or put balloons in their mouths, or have access to un-inflated or under-inflated balloons.
- Nappy sacks used for disposing of soiled nappies are kept out of children's reach.

Toxic substances:

The following items are stored in the original labelled container in a safe and secure way, separate from stored medications and food, and are inaccessible to children:

- cleaning and sanitising materials;
- detergents;
- automatic dishwasher detergents;
- aerosol cans;
- pesticides;
- health and beauty products;
- medications;
- » Shaving cream or foam is not used as play material;
- » Toys and other products using button-cell batteries, such as small electronic devices, have lockable battery compartments.

Furniture, equipment and materials

Nappy changing mats and units:

The nappy changing tables are sturdy and stable to prevent tipping over.

Nappy changing tables are at a height suitable for the staff to use. Example: at waist level.

Nappy changing supplies are within arm's reach of the changing unit before a nappy change, and staff do not step away while the child is on the unit or table.

Equipment for meal and snack time

High chairs used during meal and snack times conform to safety standards.

Equipment used during meal and snack times meets the following requirements:

- Equipment is used according to manufacturers' instructions, and is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.
- The service provides furniture and utensils that are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage children to be involved in and enjoy mealtimes.
- Children are seated at tables that are between waist and mid-chest level, and allow the seated child's feet to rest on a firm surface.
- For each child over the age of 1 year, the service provides chairs with a back and a seating height that allows the child to sit with their feet on the floor or ground.
- All furniture and eating utensils provided by the service make it possible for the children to eat at their best skill level.



- Food utensils and equipment, including furniture, are adapted if necessary to meet the developmental and physical needs of individual children.

Blind cords:

Internal blinds are safe and fitted correctly.

Beds, high-chairs, and so on, are positioned away from blinds.

Finger pinch protectors:

Finger-pinch protection devices are only installed where a risk assessment identifies a risk to children, and any devices installed are purpose made and comply with fire safety regulations. Examples: flexible plastic and rubber devices, adjustable door closing devices, other types of coverings for door gaps.

Portable heaters

Where used, portable heaters:

- are attended while in use and are turned off when unattended;
- are not accessible to children;
- have protective covering to keep hands and objects away from the heating element;
- bear the safety certification mark; Example: CE mark.
- are at least three feet from curtains, papers, furniture, and any flammable object;
- are used in line with the manufacturer's instructions;
- are not used with an extension cord;
- are placed so the electrical lead is out of children's reach. Indoor and outdoor equipment.

Furniture toys and equipment.

Furniture, toys and equipment on the premises conform to CE or EN safety standards or the European Communities (Safety of Toys) Regulations 2011, as applicable.

Daily inspection of indoor and outdoor play equipment takes place in the service.

A monthly review of the up-to-date list of products recalls and products withdrawn from use by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission is done.

Play equipment is installed and maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications.

Shock-absorbing surfaces are installed in fall zones, as recommended by the manufacturer, for the fall height of the play equipment.

Equipment, materials and furnishings are sturdy and safe and do not carry the following safety hazards:

- openings that could trap a child's head or limbs;
- elevated surfaces and structures that are poorly guarded; Example: a tree-house.

- lack of shock-absorbing surfaces and fall zones under and around climbable equipment;
- insufficient spacing between equipment;
- components that can pinch, cut or crush skin and flesh. » Equipment that is known to be of a hazardous type, is free from:
 - splinters;
 - protruding nails, bolts, or other components that could entangle clothing or snag skin;
 - loose, rusty parts.

Natural materials such as branches, shells, rocks, pine cones, leaves, 'free and found' materials used in sensorial play, are suitable to the age and stage of development of the children and are non-toxic.

Equipment, materials and furnishings are placed to help prevent collisions and injuries.

Equipment is not placed on uneven surfaces, near the top of stairs or within reach of a safety hazard, such as a window.

Large pieces of furniture, including televisions, have stable bases and are securely anchored.

Chairs and other furnishings that children can easily climb are kept away from cabinets and shelves. Stationary activity centres are used with the stabilising legs down in a locked position.

Hazardous equipment is inaccessible to children or removed until it is made safe or replaced.

'Jumpers' (bouncing equipment attached to a door frame or ceiling) and infant and baby walkers are not used.

Safety straps are used on all equipment or furniture if provided by the manufacturer of the equipment

Ride-on toys

Ride-on toys (such as tricycles) and wheeled equipment (such as scooters) used in the service:

- are assembled and maintained in line with the manufacturers' instructions;
- are capable of being steered;
- are of a suitable size for the child;
- have a low centre of gravity – that is, that the balance point is near the ground to make it stable and less likely to topple;
- are in good condition, work properly and are free of sharp edges or protrusions that could injure a child;
- are not motorised.

Sand area

Sand used in the sandbox is free of toxic or harmful materials and is replaced as necessary. Examples: animal excrement, waste, and so on.

Sandboxes in the outdoors are covered with a lid or other covering when they are not in use.

Sand play area covers are properly secured when they are lifted or moved to allow children to play in the sandbox.



Sand play areas are separated from landing areas for slides or other equipment.

Water play tables

The service adheres to the following requirements for communal water tables:

- the basin and toys are washed and sanitised at the end of the day;
- staff ensure that no child drinks water from the water table;
- the floor and surface areas under and around the water table are dried during and after play.

Stair gates

Stair gates forming a barrier for children under 24 months used by the service to restrict access to dangerous places:

- comply with fire safety requirements;
- are properly fitted;
- conform to the required safety standard (EN 1930:2011).

Trampolines

Trampolines, both full and mini-size, are prohibited from being used, both on site and during outings.

Trampolines, if prescribed as a therapeutic intervention, should only be used for that purpose.

Structural Walkway surfaces

Walking surfaces, such as footpaths, ramps and decks:

- have a non-slip finish;
- are free of water and ice and loose material;
- are free of holes and flaws in the surface.

Safe pedestrian walkways, drop-off and pick-up points at the service are:

- clearly identified;
- have been pointed out to all children, parents, guardians, staff, unpaid workers and contractors. Stairways and ramps.

Guardrails are provided at open sides of external stairs, ramps, and other walking surfaces.

Inside and outside stairs, ramps, porches and other walkways to the service's building are safe to use and are kept in good repair and are well lit.

Damaged or worn carpet is repaired.

Railings are strong, and do not have any footholds for climbing on, or gaps to fall through, crawl under or over.

Safe sleep

Policy on Safe Sleep

There is evidence of the policy on safe sleep being implemented.

Relevant staff know the requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on safe sleep.

Relevant staff have received training on the policy on safe sleep.

Follow the Tusla Safe sleep policy and guidelines

SAMPLE POLICY ON SAFE SLEEP – Tusla

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Sample_Policy_on_Safe_Sleep.docx

Administration of medication

Policy on Administration of Medication

There is evidence of the policy on administration of medication being implemented.

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on administration of medication.

Relevant staff have received training on the policy on administration of medication.

Sample policy available at https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf

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Outings

Outings Policy (if children attending the service are brought on such outings).

There is evidence of the outings policy being implemented.

Relevant staff know the requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the outings policy.

Relevant staff have received training on the outings policy.

Sample Policy available at; https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf Page 107.

Policy on Infection Control;

There is evidence of the policy on infection control being implemented.

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on infection control.

Relevant staff have received training on the policy on infection control.



Sample Policy on Infections control available at; https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf page 98.

Risk management

Risk Management Policy;

There is evidence of the risk management policy being implemented.

- Relevant staff know the requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the risk management policy.
- Relevant staff have received training on the risk management policy.

Sample policy available at https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf Page 123

Retention of risk management records; The risk management documentation, including all risk assessments completed, is kept by the service.

Accidents and Incidents

Policy on Accidents and Incidents

There is evidence of the policy on accidents and incidents being implemented.

Relevant staff know the requirements, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on accidents and incidents.

Relevant staff have received training on the policy on accidents and incidents.

Sample policy available at https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf Page 109- 111.

Fire drills

Fire drills are carried out by setting off the fire alarm every month and at the start of each new school year and more frequently if necessary.

Examples:

- following an ineffective fire drill practice;
- following a fire drill that identified risks;
- in services where sleeping children or children with additional needs are catered for.

Fire drills are carried out on different days of the week and at different times of the day.

Fire drills include a complete evacuation of the service to a prearranged, designated assembly point.

Fire extinguishers.

The fire extinguishers used are suitable and appropriate for use in the type of service being operated.

A qualified fire safety person approved the requirements for the service, and this approval is documented.

Fire training

The people using the equipment are trained in its use, and were trained by a qualified person.

Fire training is undertaken at least every 2 years.

Fire alarms and smoke alarms

A fire alarm is in place in every premises used for Early Years Services.

Fire alarms in the service are maintained in line with the requirements set out in Fire Safety in Pre-Schools 1999.

All alarms are checked every year by a competent person with appropriate training. Records of this testing are kept by the service.

Self-contained smoke alarms (mains powered) are tested at least once a month by using the test button on the units to ensure the alarm is sounding. This testing is documented.

General fire safety

Fire doors are not obstructed or propped open.

Fire exits are clearly identified and easily opened from the inside.

If window restrictors are in use, they are able to be opened in case of fire using a child-resistant catch.

All information in this document comes from the QRF

Tusla () Quality Regulatory Framework

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