



## **Early Years Services: Self-Assessment Checklist**

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This self-assessment checklist was developed by Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate to provide practical guidance for registered providers on how to prepare for reopening their services and how to keep children safe. The document '**Guidance for Early Years Services COVID-19**' should be used in conjunction with this checklist.

Before reopening, registered providers must review and enhance infection control measures. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 requires that a registered provider has an infection control policy and a risk management policy in place. Regulation 23 places responsibility on the registered provider to safeguard children in their care and to provide a safe environment.

This self-assessment checklist strives to facilitate compliance within the regulations and COVID-19 requirements whilst protecting children and staff at this time. The checklist is broken down into two sections:

- Section 1: Prior to reopening
- Section 2: Practice when reopened

During inspections, Tusla will assess:

1. the procedures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in line with the self-assessment checklist
2. previous non-compliances not closed out and
3. the overall care and well-being of children

For additional and continuously updated information, please see the HPSC guidance: Infection Prevention and Control guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic([www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)).

### Section 1: Prior to Reopening

**Prior to the reopening of the Early Years’ Service, the registered provider must ensure that the following measures have been put into place.**

Name of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Pre-Opening Self-Assessment Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Self-Assessment/s Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Policies	Status	Notes
The policy on infection control has been updated to include infection control measures for COVID-19 and incorporates an enhanced cleaning schedule.		
The cleaning schedule has been revised.		

<p>A risk management policy is in place which identifies any potential risks and the controls required to reduce or eliminate the risk. The policy has been reviewed in light of the COVID- 19 pandemic.</p>		
<p>An incident plan is in place which outlines actions to be taken should a child/staff member has or is suspected of having COVID-19.</p>		
<p>Staff rosters have been reviewed to ensure staff- child ratios are in line with regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to staff rosters to minimise the movement of staff between rooms and the staggering of break time.</p>		

Staff Information & Training	Status	Notes
<p>Staff have received information and training for managing COVID-19, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies of the service, including infection control policy, risk management policy, incident plan</li> <li>• Guidance on non-attendance if a child is symptomatic, a close contact, or in cases of overseas travel in accordance with public health advice</li> <li>• Training on correct procedures for hand washing</li> <li>• Revised drop off and collection procedures</li> <li>• Revised procedures for setting up a play environment</li> <li>• Revised procedures for cleaning</li> <li>• Health and Safety Authority return to work protocol</li> </ul> <p>A record is maintained of all training provided to staff members.</p>		
<p>Each staff member has been contacted to ascertain if they have been in contact with a suspected/confirmed case or are experiencing symptoms themselves.</p>		

Communication with parents / guardians and other visitors to the service	Status	Notes
<p>Pathways have been developed for communicating with parents of changes in policy and practices.</p>		

<p>Parents have received information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised policies of the service including infection control policy,</li> <li>• Procedures for dropping off and picking up children</li> <li>• Guidance on non-attendance if a child is symptomatic, a close contact of a confirmed case, or following overseas travel in accordance with public health advice</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions in the event of a child or staff member showing symptoms of COVID-19</li> <li>• Updating of children’s enrolment forms (where relevant)</li> </ul>		
<p>Appropriate procedures are in place for external deliveries or cleaning contractors to the service.</p>		

Physical Environment - Building	Status	Notes
<p>The premises has been cleaned thoroughly, both internally and externally, prior to the service reopening, including all toys and equipment.</p>		
<p>Space requirements have been reviewed in line with current regulatory requirements.</p>		
<p>Information notices are provided at each entrance to the service stating that children and staff may not attend if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have symptoms of COVID-19</li> <li>• been a close contact of a confirmed case, or</li> <li>• following overseas travel in accordance with public health advice</li> </ul>		
<p>Child-friendly signage is displayed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical distance markers in communal areas and at drop off and collection points</li> <li>• Requirements to avoid congregating in groups at the entrance of the service.</li> <li>• Requirements for social distancing – 2 metres</li> </ul>		
<p>Temperature recording devices are available (as normal) in the service for recording children’s temperatures, as necessary.</p>		
<p>An adequate supply of cleaning agents and equipment is available in each room of the service.</p> <p>Safe storage is available for cleaning agents and equipment.</p>		

<p>The cleaning agents and equipment are monitored and replenished when required.</p>		
<p>A supply of hand sanitiser (as per the specifications from HSE guidance) is provided at the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• entrance to the service/building and</li> <li>• care rooms and ancillary rooms</li> </ul>		
<p>A supply of warm water (&lt;43°C), liquid soap and paper towels are available.</p> <p>Age-appropriate signage on handwashing techniques is displayed.</p> <p>Notices for the correct use of hand sanitiser is located beside each dispenser.</p>		
<p>Staff are required to wear appropriate PPE (i.e., gloves and aprons) for cleaning and nappy changing practices.</p> <p>A small supply of surgical masks is available for anyone that develops symptoms of COVID-19 or if a staff member chooses to use one when caring for a sick child.</p> <p>Stocks of PPE are monitored and replenished when required.</p>		
<p>Facilities have been identified to accommodate a staff member or child who is showing symptoms of COVID-19. This could be:</p> <p>A separate well-ventilated room,</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>An area which is 2m away from other people.</p>		
<p>Consideration has been given to the layout of the care rooms to ensure that children are kept in small, consistent groups (play-pods) and mixing with other groups is avoided.</p>		



<p>Consideration has been given to the most appropriate toys/play equipment and materials to be used internally and externally.</p>		
<p>Toys are in good condition, and easy to clean and disinfect.</p>		
<p>The layout of the outdoor area has been reviewed, and procedures are in place to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children from different play-pods are separated, in so far as practical</li> <li>• Cleaning and disinfection of toys and equipment prior to and after use by each group of children</li> </ul>		

**Section 2: Practice once Open**

**When the Early Years’ Service has reopened, the registered provider must ensure that the following measures are being carried out.**

Date/s Self-Assessment Completed post re-opening \_\_\_\_\_

Self-Assessment/s Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance Records	Status	Notes
<p>Complete and Accurate records of attendance must be kept for all children and adults and, where unavoidable, any visitors to the service.</p> <p>Attendance records include details of staff and children in each play-pod.</p>		

Hand Hygiene	Status	Notes
<p>Handwashing facilities are provided with a supply of warm water (&lt;43°C), liquid soap and paper towels.</p> <p>A supply of hand sanitiser is readily available throughout the service.</p>		

<p>Foot-operated pedal bins for the disposal of paper towels are available at each wash hand basin and throughout the service.</p>		
<p>Hand sanitiser may be used as an alternative for hand washing where handwashing facilities are not readily available (e.g., outdoors).</p>		
<p>Staff and children wash their hands regularly during the day. Children are assisted and encouraged to wash their hands frequently.</p>		

Personal Hygiene / Respiratory Etiquette	Status	Notes
Children are taught and supervised in the correct and hand washing and hand drying techniques (age-appropriately).		
<p>Safe practices are followed for coughing, sneezing and wiping noses. Tissues are disposed of promptly after use into a waste bin.</p> <p>Hands are washed or sanitised immediately afterwards.</p> <p>A supply of tissues is readily available in each care room.</p>		
Hand sanitiser is available and used by staff each time they enter and leave a room.		
Children are supervised whilst using hand sanitiser at all times.		
All staff have a spare set of clothes available if required in the service.		
Each child has an adequate supply of clean clothes available in the service.		

Suspected Case of COVID-19	Status	Notes
<p>The service incident plan is implemented if symptoms of COVID-19 or any other infectious illness is suspected. (Refer to HPSC guidance).</p> <p>Use of an infrared non-contact thermometer is available. (If not using an infrared thermometer, a thermometer with single-use protective covers must be used).</p>		

Maintaining Social Distancing of 2m (where possible)	Status	Notes
<p>Social distancing by adults (staff and parents/guardians) is maintained where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queuing and congregating at arrival and pick up times is avoided.</li> <li>• Distance markers are in place in communal areas and drop off and pickup points.</li> <li>• Children are brought straight to their specific care room on arrival.</li> </ul>		
<p>To facilitate the operation of a play-pod system, staff are aware of the requirements of social distancing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing room layout</li> <li>• Reviewing toys/equipment in use each day</li> <li>• Reviewing activities being carried out with children</li> <li>• Avoiding mixing play-pods/groups of children</li> <li>• Avoiding the use of communal areas</li> <li>• Reviewing procedures for mealtimes</li> </ul>		
<p>Procedures have been put in place to ensure that staff breaks are scheduled to ensure adequate staff ratios and to restrict staff gatherings.</p>		
<p>Movement by staff and children between rooms is restricted to control the spread of infection.</p>		

Environmental Cleaning	Status	Notes
A cleaning schedule is available and is being implemented correctly in all parts of the service, including the outdoor area.		
A supply of cleaning agents is readily available and stored safely in each room in the service.		
<p>A supply of cleaning equipment is available and where possible located in each care room.</p> <p>Cleaning equipment is stored appropriately and safely when not in use.</p> <p>Cleaning supplies are monitored and replenished when required.</p>		
A supply of PPE (i.e. gloves and aprons) is available and used for cleaning duties.		
High contact areas such as tables, counters, door and cupboard handles, switches, taps, flush handles, backs of chairs and handrails are cleaned frequently during the operating hours.		
Clean linen is stored in a defined, clean area.		
<p>Soiled linen is stored safely to avoid cross- contamination until it is laundered.</p> <p>All laundry is washed at the highest temperature the fabric will tolerate.</p>		

Waste Management	Status	Notes
<p>Foot-operated pedal waste bins are available in all rooms and accessible to staff and children which are emptied regularly.</p> <p>Staff wash their hands following this task.</p>		
<p>All bins are routinely cleaned and disinfected, particularly handles and lids.</p>		
<p>Contingency plans are in place when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs in the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A supply of refuse bags is available for the double-bagging and disposal of contaminated waste</li> <li>• A designated area for the storage of possible contaminated COVID-19 waste for 3 days is available after which time it can be placed with normal waste</li> </ul>		

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Status	Notes
<p>A supply of PPE (i.e., gloves and masks) is available if a suspected case is identified or when required by staff in the service.</p> <p>PPE is accessible and stored safely.</p>		

Ventilation	Status	Notes
<p>All rooms in the service are adequately ventilated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windows that are regularly opened routinely throughout the day</li> <li>• Mechanical ventilation system that is functioning correctly</li> </ul>		

Toys and Play Materials/Activities	Status	Notes
<p>Toys available for use are easy to clean and disinfect. If used, play dough is to be replaced daily, and soft toys are be washed regularly.</p> <p>Toys are separated for each play-pod. All toys are in a good state of repair.</p>		



<p>Toys that children put in their mouths are washed after use or before use.</p> <p>Mouthing toys are not shared between children.</p>		
<p>A procedure is in place for the cleaning, sterilisation and safe storage of soothers.</p>		
<p>Individual soothers, bottles, sippy cups etc. are available for children to avoid sharing and spreading infections.</p> <p>Each item is identified to the relevant child.</p>		
<p>The toys and equipment within each care room are reviewed to ensure there is an adequate supply for the number of children present and for the activities planned on a daily basis.</p>		

Outdoor Area & Activities	Status	Notes
Use of the outdoor area by more than one play- pod /group of children is safely facilitated.		
A risk assessment is carried out where services plan to go on outings.		
Fixed play equipment in the outdoor area is cleaned after each play-pod / group uses the area.		

Food Provision	Status	Notes
<p>If dining rooms are available, the mixing of different groups of children is avoided. A thorough cleaning takes place before and after use by each group.</p> <p>Snacks and meals are brought to the individual care rooms and served by the staff members allocated to that room, where possible.</p>		

Sleep / Rest	Status	Notes
<p>Sleeping cots are arranged so that there is a physical distance between groups of cots for children from different pods.</p>		
<p>Where sleep equipment is allocated to one child;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cots, sleep mats and day beds are labelled with the name of the child using it</li> <li>• Bed linen solely for the use of the individual child is used</li> </ul>		
<p>Where sleep equipment is shared, strict infection control practices are undertaken;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning and disinfection of the cot frame,</li> <li>• Cleaning of the mattress,</li> <li>• Changing of the bed linen,</li> <li>• Labelling the sleep equipment with the names of children using it</li> <li>• A record is maintained of each change of bed linen</li> </ul>		
<p>Sleep mats and day beds are cleaned prior to and following each use.</p>		
<p>An adequate supply of clean bed linen is available and stored to prevent cross-infection.</p>		

<p>Soiled linen is safely removed and laundered. All linen is washed to the highest temperature that the fabric can tolerate.</p>		
<p>Suitable facilities are available for the storage of day beds and sleep mats when not in use.</p>		
<p>Furniture and equipment used in the cosy/quiet area for rest are in a clean condition.</p>		