

PRESS RELEASE



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Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

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Minister O’Gorman announces consultation on a Review of Regulations for Early Learning and Care

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman, T.D., today announced the launch of a [consultation](#) seeking the public’s views on a review of the Regulations governing the Early Learning and Care (ELC) sector. The review will primarily focus on strengthening of the enforcement powers of the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate to allow it to intervene more promptly where it has concerns about significant breaches of regulations by a service. The review will also take the opportunity to examine lessons learned from the implementation of the Regulations since 2016, looking particularly at areas for clarification or streamlining of the Regulations.

The regulation of early learning and care (ELC) services is provided for in the [Child Care Act 1991 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 \(the Act\)](#) and the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016 \(the Regulations\)](#). The Act provides substantial powers to the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate (Tusla EYI), the independent statutory regulator for the sector, in relation to registration, inspection and enforcement. The Regulations set out **the minimum standards** ELC services must meet in order to register with the Tusla EYI and to operate an ELC service.

A review of the enforcement powers of the Tusla EYI commenced in 2019 but was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth recommenced this important work in 2021. As the regulation of ELC services impacts a wide range of stakeholders including providers, early years educators, parents and children, the Minister wishes to obtain the views of all stakeholders and the wider public on the review.

Launching the consultation, Minister O’Gorman said:

"I am delighted to be able to launch this public consultation and so progress this very important review of the Early Learning and Care Regulations. The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate already has substantial powers to address poor quality where it arises. We also know that most services are

compliant with the Regulations. However, in the small number of cases where significant or persistent breaches of Regulations arise, it is important that Tusla has the necessary powers to intervene quickly and ensure the safety of children attending a service.”

“While the review will primarily focus on strengthening Tusla powers, I have also asked my officials to examine if there are other ways in which we can improve the Regulations. While a full overhaul of the Regulations is not envisaged, we will look at areas where we can streamline requirements or where clarification of existing regulations is needed.”

“As this review will impact a wide range of stakeholders, I hope that as many people as possible respond and give us their views. We want to hear from all stakeholders including ELC providers, early years educators and parents.”

ENDS

Notes to the Editor:

The consultation involves a call for submissions and an online survey, both of which will be open for 6 weeks. Following this, topics may be identified from the submissions and survey responses for further discussion in a series of focus groups. If required, the DCEDIY may decide to host further consultation events.

Read more about the consultation [here](#).

Issued by the Press and Communications Office at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Tel: 01 647 - 3153/3032

Email: media@equality.gov.ie

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