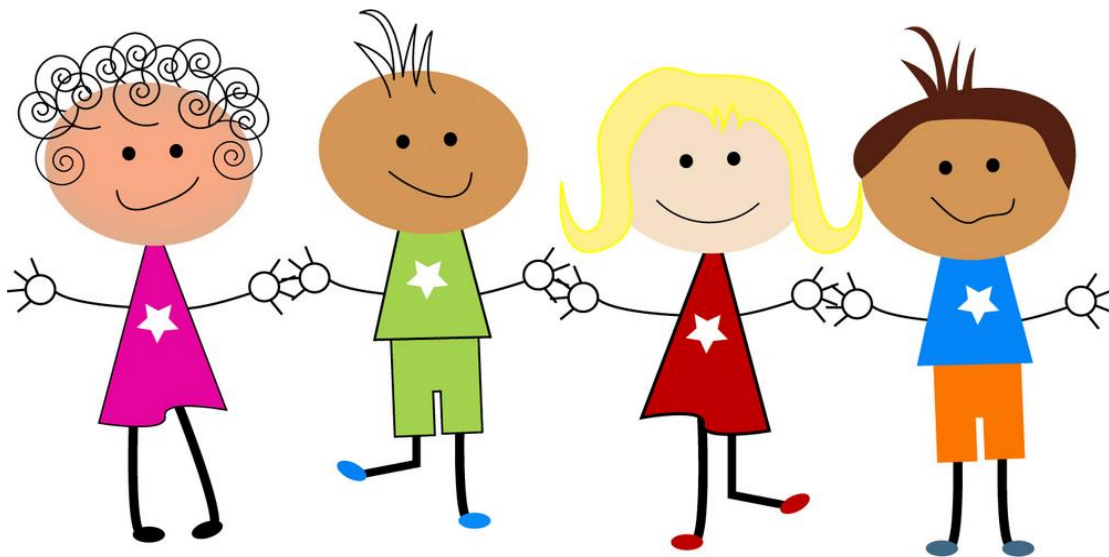


A PLACE TO
GROW

A Place to Grow
Parent Handbook



Introduction

Dear Parents / Guardians/ Carers,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to A Place to Grow Early Years' service. We have 3 settings that cater for the early years needs of the local communities:

- A Place to Grow Adamstown located in Adamstown Community Centre
- A Place to Grow Raheen located in Raheen Family Resource Centre.
- A Place to Grow Rathgarogue located in Scoil Naomh Aine (Rathgarogue Primary School)

Our centre in Adamstown caters for children aged from 2½ years up to 5 years offering a Preschool service

Our centre in Raheen caters for children from 6 months up to 12 years in our purpose built early years centre.

Our service in Rathgarogue Primary School caters for school-aged children up to the age of 12years

All centres have fully qualified staff in Childcare and Early Education. All staff are regularly involved in continual professional development training to ensure that we are providing a quality service for all children and families that use our centre.

We hope that your child's time with us will be a happy and memorable one.

At A Place to Grow, we are always seeking to develop and improve, and we hope that your association with us will be rewarding and happy.

If at any time you have concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please remember that no worry is too small to share with us: we will endeavour to help as best we can.

Yours Sincerely

Michelle Nolan
Early Years Services Manager

Maria Power
Assistant Services Manager



Contact Details

A Place to Grow Raheen, Adamstown and Rathgarogue are subgroups of Raheen Community Development Group Ltd.

<p>A Place to Grow Raheen Raheen FRC , Raheen, Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford Tel: 051 428805 Email: childcare@raheenfrc.ie</p>	<p>A Place to Grow Adamstown, Adamstown Community Centre, Adamstown County Wexford Tel: 051 428805 Email: childcare@raheenfrc.ie</p>	<p>A Place to Grow Rathgarogue Scoil Naoimh Aine, Rathgarogue New Ross County Wexford Tel: 051 428805 Email: rathgarogueafterschool@gmail.com</p>
--	--	---

Opening Hours

A Place to Grow Raheen opening hours are:

- Monday to Friday, 8.00am – 5.30pm
- The centre is open for 49 weeks per year, closing only for Public Holidays, Good Friday, and the Christmas period for two weeks.

A Place to Grow Adamstown opening hours are:

- Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 5.00pm
- The centre is open for 38 weeks per year, in line with the academic calendar set by the primary school.

A Place to Grow Rathgarogue opening hours are:

- Monday to Thursday 8.00-9.00am & 2.00-6.00pm
- Friday (currently Subject to changed based on demand) 2.00-4.30pm
- This service operates for 38weeks per year, in line with the academic calendar set by Scoil Naomh Aine

Mission Statement

Raheen Family Resource Centre using a universal approach to Family Support alleviates unemployment, enhances education, training opportunities, depletes addresses isolation, encourages and supports individuals and families within the community.

Our aim at A Place to Grow, is to provide a range of high quality, affordable and accessible options to meet the needs of parents and their children in their early years and throughout their primary school life in a safe, friendly and child-centred environment. Priority is always given to the needs and best interests of the child.

We are committed to making the service accessible to all through provision of affordable childcare. Having strong roots in our community, we value ongoing input from parents and children, thereby always making our service relevant to the needs of the community.

We aim to achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach that is implemented by our service, and by working in partnership with families, children and the early year's team. Done both individually through reflective practice, and in consultation with children and their families to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use any of our services.

Equality Statement

At A Place to Grow, we respect each child as an individual regardless of age, gender, race, disability, social status or religious beliefs. Each child is offered equal opportunities to enable the full participation of every child in all activities.

Religious Ethos

A Place to Grow is non-denominational and as such is open to children from all races, cultures and religious backgrounds. The centre does not promote any particular religious practices.

- In line with our policies around equality for children and for staff, we do encourage activities that enable children to develop positive attitudes to differences of race, culture, religion and language.
- We do include references to spirituality in our work with the children, for example Easter, the story of St. Patrick, etc. Many of these references are directly related to the Roman Catholic religion, which is predominant in our area.

- If a parent expresses concern about the references detailed above, the Early Years Services Manager will discuss this with parents and agree an approach that is respectful of any concerns
- Each child and their families ethnic origins/religious beliefs are appreciated and reflected positively

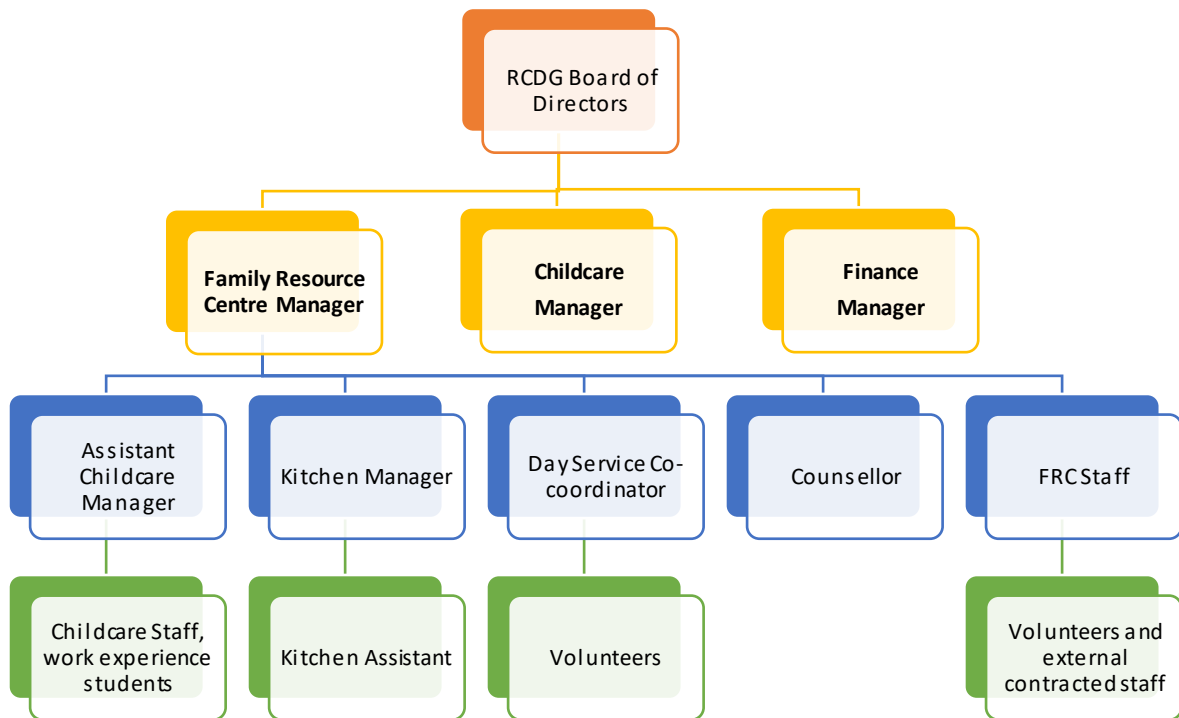
Background

A social audit carried out in 1997, identified a lack of childcare services in Raheen and the surrounding area, this created barriers to families trying to access education, training or employment. Funding was secured and a childcare facility was set up in a back room of the community centre in Raheen. It had approximately 15 children, run by volunteers and a play group leader on a very small budget. The centre grew and developed and a need for a purpose built childcare facility was identified.

In 2000 the company was set up as a not-for-profit organization. The then Management Committee of Raheen Community Development Group Ltd. applied for and secured capital funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP). In 2001, the Family Resource Centre was established under Raheen Community Development Group Ltd. which took over the development of the childcare centre. Construction started on the new purpose built childcare centre for the community and the building was opened in October 2004. Since this opening the centre has grown from strength to strength.

This led to the opening of a service in Adamstown in September 2015. There was an identified need for an early years services in the community and Raheen FRC set about helping the community with this issue by establishing a new service in the Community Centre. This new centre provides a pre-school service in the morning and an after-school service each afternoon.

Management Structure



Staff List at A Place to Grow

Childcare Manager: Michelle Nolan

Assistant Manager: Maria Power

Room Leaders: Ewelina McGrath
 Maria Power
 Brid Schedwill
 Olga Malone
 Serena Rochford
 Matthew Forsyth

Room Assistants: Annette Doyle
 Sandra Bolger
 Geraldine Bradley
 Tara Carroll
 Pauline Tait
 Trish Murphy
 Leonie Kennedy

Aim Support Worker: Denise Harler
 Tara Carroll
 Irina Aav

Staff Qualifications

In line with Department of Children and Youth Affairs Regulations, all of our early year's staff hold a relevant qualification for their post.

The Manager of the early years' service has a QQI Level 8 Honours Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care. The Early Years Room Leaders range in their qualifications from QQI Level 5 in Childcare up to QQI Level 8 Honours Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Amongst the Room Leaders they have experience ranging from two years in an early years' service up to twenty one years' experience.

The Early Years Assistants have all completed their QQI Level 5 in Childcare with some also after completing their QQI Level 6 in Childcare. On our relief panel we also have staff that are fully qualified.

Throughout the year we strive to keep up-to-date within the early year's sector by completing Continual Professional Development training, along with partaking in annual training such as First Aid Responder training, Fire Safety Awareness training, HACCP Level 1 and Manual Handling training. We also engage with relevant agencies such as Early Childhood Ireland and Wexford County Childcare Committee to keep up-to-date with the changes in the sector.

Tusla Registered Services

Both services operating under Raheen Community Development Group Ltd (trading as Raheen FRC) are registered with the Child and Family Agency Tusla on an annual basis. Inspections by Tusla are also due to occur on an annual basis. By being registered with Tusla the service goes through a rigorous inspection that makes sure that all children are cared for in a loving, educational and safe environment. The annual inspections are welcomed by all staff at A Place to grow as it validates the excellent work completed by them. Once an inspection has been completed we inform our parents and forward a link to the website that displays all inspection reports for all early years services inspected by Tusla.

Government Funded Childcare Schemes

At A Place to Grow, parents can avail of Childcare programmes that are funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and these funds are subsequently managed by Pobal.

The main programme that is availed of in both Raheen and Adamstown centres is the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme for pre-school children.



- The ECCE programme provides 2 free years of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age (3 Hours per day/ 15 Hours per week) Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme at three separate entry points during the year, September, January and April, depending on their date of birth. This scheme is available to children from the age of three.

At A Place to Grow Raheen, Adamstown and Rathgarogue there are additional funding programmes that can be availed of by parents/guardians. These programmes include:

- The Affordable Childcare Scheme- NCS

As of September 2017 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs aimed to introduce the Affordable childcare scheme to target children aged 6-36 months old in Tusla-registered childcare facilities. This scheme will allow all families to receive some amount of childcare subvention. For more information on your eligibility for this scheme see affordablechildcare.ie.

Adult to Child Ratios

At A Place to Grow we adhere to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 for the adult to child ratios for the centres. These ratios are adhered to at all times with fully qualified staff.

The ratios below relate to full time (5+ hours per day) and Part time (3.5 hours – 5 hours per day) services

0 – 1 year of age	1 adult : 3 children
1 – 2 years of age	1 adult : 5 children
2 – 3 years of age	1 adult : 6 children
3 – 6 years of age	1 adult : 8 children

The ratios below relate to Sessional Services (up to 3.5 hours per day)

0 – 1 year of age	1 adult : 3 children
1 – 2.5 years of age	1 adult : 5 children
2.5 – 6 years of age	1 adult : 11 children
SAC 5-12years of age	1 adult : 12 children

Registrations for A Place to Grow

In all centres we adhere to ratios that have been outlined by Tusla for the number of children that can be accepted on a daily basis.

A Place to Grow Adamstown

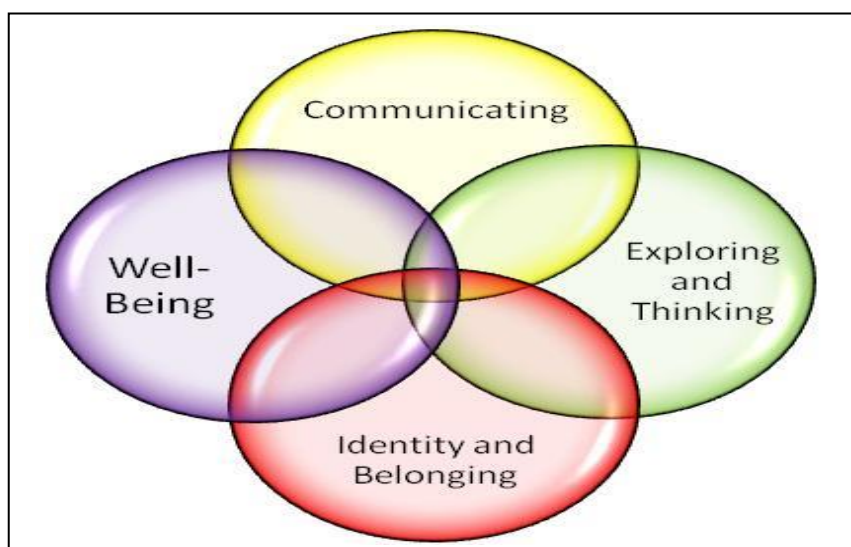
Age Range	Places per day
2½ years – 5 years	18

A Place to Grow Raheen

Age Range	Places per day
6 months – 18 months	6 Babies
18 months - 2½ years	10 Wobblers
2½ years – 3½ years	16 Toddlers
3½ years – 5 years	21 Pre-schoolers
After-school	30 After-schoolers

- Children that will change across the age brackets mentioned above throughout the academic year may be required to move room according to their age and availability within the room. If the child moves from one age bracket to another between September and December of that given year a space will be left for them to change rooms at the beginning of the academic year. Any room changes after this will be subject to availability.

Aistear and A Place to Grow



(Themes of Aistear: National Curriculum Framework)

Aistear is the early childhood curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. Because early childhood marks the beginning of children's lifelong learning journeys, this framework is called Aistear, the Irish word for journey.

Both of our early years services practice the national childhood curriculum. Aistear is based on four themes that all work together to provide structure and support in early learning which enables all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Both centres share staff and unified values in delivery and practice. Close working and collaboration means each child is offered high quality experiences that are mirrored in both settings.

Outdoor Learning

Learning outdoors is an important area within the curriculum. At both bases, the staff and children use the outdoor area as an extension to their rooms. By providing daily opportunities for outdoor play and learning, the children have the freedom to experience energetic play without the restraints of the indoor environment. By playing outdoors the children have the opportunity to be challenged and involved in risk-taking activities, large physical play and exercise, planting and growing activities, den making, and various other activities. This allows children the opportunity to begin to appreciate the world around them through nature.

Parents Provide....

Nappies and creams

We ask parents to provide these for babies up to Toddler age group before they are toilet trained. To ensure your child can be kept clean and dry, please ensure that you supply adequate nappies and wipes for each day/week. If your child needs nappy cream, please supply this. Creams must be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Shoes, Clothes and Dressing for the Weather

Please ensure there is also a change of clothes for your child, should they have an accident or get a little wet playing in the water. We ask that parents dress children appropriately for weather for the purposes of outdoor play. In warm weather, please provide sunscreen and a hat for your child.

Comforters and soothers

If your child has a favourite teddy or blanket or a soother that they use on a daily basis these can be brought to the centre to help your child relax for their nap or for them to have on occasion during the day. Please inform your child's room leader of when your child would usually have their comforter or soother.

Toilet Training

Staff offer support for children and parents during this stage by remaining calm and offering praise as a reward for achievements. To help us and your child, we ask parents to provide at numerous changes of clothes and suitable footwear (e.g. jelly shoes, crocs, etc.) during this stage of your child's development.

Babies, Milk and Weaning

In A Place to Grow Raheen there is a dedicated milk kitchen in the Baby Room for special storage of your baby's milk. Parents bring in prepared formula or breast milk daily, which staff will label and store for your child. Please talk to the room leader for further details

Meals & Snacks

Both Early Years Centres actively promote healthy eating and lifestyles through our Healthy Eating Policy. Parents are asked to provide snacks that are in line with our healthy eating policy (which can be found in this booklet). There is a morning snack each day and an afternoon snack if your child is pre-booked on a full-time basis. In Raheen children can avail of a hot meal for their dinner that is cooked daily in the FRC kitchen. You also have the option if you wish to provide a further snack or meal that can be heated by the Early Years staff for your child/children.

Early Years Services Policies for A Place to Grow

This handbook contains a synopsis of all of our policies. If you wish to read any of the policies and procedures in detail please request these from the Early Years Services Manager.

We would encourage you to read over all of the policies in the handbook.

Admissions Policy

- It is the policy of A Place to Grow that our service is open to all families in our community. We are committed to operating open and fair Admissions Procedures.
- Our Admissions Policy operates on a first come, first served basis for children aged 6 Months -12 years. This is regardless of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, membership of any ethnic group, and religious belief.
- Our inspection by the Pre-school services officer dictates the number of children we can cater for in any one room at a given time and a waiting list system is in operation thereafter.
- Parents seeking to secure a place for their child must complete a Waiting List Form.
- A completed Waiting List Form must be lodged with the service prior to the child attending. Once you have been notified by the Manager/Assistant Manager that a space has become available for your child, you will then be asked to sign and complete a Contract/Child record Form for the academic year ahead. Completion of these Forms is compulsory and secures the space.
- Places will be allocated according to your child's place on the waiting list, subject to the type of place you require being available.
- Referrals from family support services will be accepted provided there is a place available.
- If you wish to appeal an admission decision, please contact the Manager.

Registration Policy

- A comprehensive Contract and Child Record Form must be completed prior to a child attending A Place to Grow. This is to ensure that all the relevant information that will help us get to know the child is made available and we will be able to deal with anything that may arise. All forms are treated with the strictest confidence and adheres to our data protection policy and the Data Protection Act 1988 – 2003.

Registration of a child can only be done by prior arrangement and with the Early Years Services Manager/Assistant Manager.

Guidelines on daily attendances

- Any children who attend over 3 hours will be charged the half day rate.
- Any children who attend over 4 hours will automatically fall into a full day rate.
- Any children going over an 8 hour stay will be charged an additional hourly rate for each extra hour or part of.
- You will be liable for all places agreed in your contract whether your child is in attendance or not.
- A contracted place can be cancelled in full or to allow for a holiday by giving minimum 2 weeks written notice on the green forms available at reception. These must be signed by the manager before they are applicable.
- A childcare place will be forfeited if the child is absent for 2 consecutive weeks, unless the Childcare Manager is informed. Otherwise the place will be appointed to another child and we cannot guarantee when another place will become available.
- If a parent has not arrived to collect their child when the centre is due to close at 5.30 pm they will be charged a **€20 Late Fee** after to facilitate payment of staff for this time.

Discounts and DCYA Schemes

A Place to Grow has many money saving incentives available for parents that use our service.

- Parents/Guardians in A Place to Grow Adamstown can avail of the ECCE scheme if their child is of the age to receive this scheme. This is on a sessional basis from 9.30am – 12.30 pm. Once a child turns three years of age they can register for this scheme as long as we have availability in the centre.
- Parents/Guardians in A Place to Grow Raheen can avail of the ECCE scheme and NCS Scheme. Parents/Guardians that use our centre for sessional, part-time or on a full-time basis can avail of these schemes once they or the child is eligible. Please note that only one DCEDIY scheme can be availed of at any one time per child.
- As and from September 2017 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs have introduced the Affordable childcare scheme to target children aged 6-36 months old in Tusla-registered childcare facilities. This scheme entitles all families to

receive some amount of childcare subvention. For more information on your eligibility for this scheme see affordablechildcare.ie.

Payment of fees Policy

- We ask all parents/guardians to pay their fees in advance at the start of each week.
- Fees can be paid in A Place to Grow Adamstown directly to the Early Years Services Team Leader (if Applicable- Non-ECCE child) and a receipt will be issued weekly. If fees are paid outside of these times, they must be presented to the Room Leader in a sealed envelope and a receipt will be available on your child's next day of attendance.
- In A Place to Grow Raheen, fees can be paid at the front desk each day between 8.45 am and 4.15pm. If the Early Years' Service Manager is available outside of these times fees can be paid to her but no other members of the Early Years staff.
- Fees must be paid even when the child is absent due to illness, except in special circumstances and with the agreement of the management committee/manager.
- Parents will sign a contract agreeing the terms of the fee payment policy.
- In the event of a change in fees, parents will be given at least 4 weeks' notice.

Non-payment of fees Policy

- As outlined above fees must be paid at the start of each week. Should you need to make a different arrangement, you must make the Early Years Services Manager aware of this and it must be approved before it can happen.
- Outstanding bills are checked at the end of each week and parents/guardians will be made aware if payments have been missed.
- Non-payment of fees over consecutive weeks will result in a meeting with the Early Years Services Manager or the Project Manager. You may put your child/children's place at risk if you continue to use the service without making weekly payments.

Full fees list can be found in Appendix 1

Child Collection Policy

- A parent or adult named on child's registration form can only collect children who attend our Early Years Services. Children must be collected by an adult over 18

years of age. The parent/guardian must notify the Early Years Services Manager of any change to this arrangement.

- If staff are informed by a parent/guardian that somebody who is not down for collection will be collecting the child, they will then need to sign for the child before leaving the premises. This may only occur during unforeseen circumstances.
- If a person not named on the registration form comes to collect the child, the staff will contact the parent/carer for their consent
- Children must be always collected on time. If there is a delay in picking up children a fee will apply.
- If a Parent/Carer asks the staff not to allow another named authorised person to collect a child, they will be asked to resolve the issue between them and to inform the staff of their decision.
- If a decision about collection cannot be resolved mutually by both parties and a parent/carer continues to insist that another authorised person should not collect the child, evidence will be sought to support their position e.g. evidence that one is a legal guardian and the other is not, or official evidence of a potential risk to the child.
- Parents are advised to contact the centre as soon as they realise that they may be unavoidably delayed.

Once a parent collects their child – they resume care of the child even if the child is still in the centre

Settling In Policy

- At A Place to Grow we encourage parents to visit our facility with their child before the child actually starts and at any time during the “settling-in period”.
- We recognise that a change in environment can be difficult for many children and therefore we recommend that children are introduced gradually.
- It can also be a difficult experience for parents/guardians and thus we operate an “Open Door” policy, welcoming parents at all times.

Parental Involvement Policy

- At A Place to Grow we recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children and they are encouraged to drop in at any time and are free to discuss any concerns that they have with the Early Years Services Manager.
- It is important that we maintain a good working partnership with parents and guardians at all times.

- Parents should feel welcome as well as confident and secure about his/her child's health, safety, happiness and development in our centre
- We both have the same agenda, the best interests of your child and therefore we take a partnership approach to the care we provide.
- Parents are provided with a handbook giving details of the service before the child starts at the service.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in decisions about policies and procedures operated by the service, and any other aspect of the service that affects their child.
- Parents are welcome to visit the service at any time.
- Room Leaders are available to discuss any concerns a parent may have regarding their child and the service.

Record Keeping Policy

At A Place to Grow we will maintain all records according to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 to ensure the health & safety of staff and children and to promote the learning development of all children attending the service.

Aims:

- We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
- Under the *Freedom of Information Act 2014*, parents will have access to all records pertaining to their child.
- Any personal information maintained; relative to families and/or staff, will be done so in line with our obligations to the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.
- Staff members will only have access to records of children in their care and will be used to inform staff on how best to meet the needs of each child and plan for further learning.
- The service will only share information with other professionals or agencies, with consent from parents or without their consent in terms of legal responsibility in relation to the welfare of the child.
- Staff follow *Siolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education guidelines* in relation to various aspects of record keeping within the service.

Records Relating to Children

Register of Pre-School Children

A register of every child attending the service is maintained.

The information on the register will be up dated on an ongoing basis.

Health and Safety

Records will be maintained in relation to medical administration and accident report forms which will be co-signed by parents / guardians, staff and the manager.

Written parental consent is obtained to allow the service to seek medical assistance for a child in case of an emergency.

Information on children's allergies will be displayed in their play area and in the kitchen so that all staff are aware of allergies.

The daily arrival and departure time of each child is recorded in the "sign in sheet" which is situated in each playroom.

Observation, Assessment and Programme Planning

Staff use regular observation and assessment as a means of supporting and planning for children's learning and development. Observations and assessments are recorded in the form of written observations and discussion, photos and the use of children's work. These will in turn be shared regularly with staff and parents to ensure a cohesive approach to ensuring the needs of each child are met.

A record of the planned programme / activities is clearly documented through short, medium and long term plans. Observations and assessment records are used to inform the plans and ensure that activities are suitable for the age, stage and interests of children in the service.

An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) may be used to support the individual needs of children.

These will be developed in partnership with parents and relevant professionals involved in a child's care.

Records of each child are available on the premises for inspection by

(a) A child's parent or guardian but only in respect of information concerning their child.

(b) Staff members with whom the information is relevant

(c) An authorised person e.g. Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate Team

Programme of Care for Babies / Toddlers

Daily information will be recorded and shared with parents / guardians outlining settling in periods, 1:1 experiences with key worker, activities carried out, food and drink, nappy changes, sleep etc.

Data Protection Policy

The setting is considered a Data Controller and will abide by the requirements of the DPA legislation The eight rules of Data Protection which are: -

1. Obtain and process personal information fairly
2. Keep personal information only for the lawful purposes that have been explicitly notified to the end user;
3. Use and disclose personal information only in ways compatible with these purposes
4. Keep all personal information safe and secure
5. Keep all personal information accurate, complete and up-to-date
6. Ensure that all personal information is adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which it was collected

7. Retain personal information for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to an individual, on request.

Confidentiality Policy

It is our policy at A Place to grow to keep confidential all personal information about the children, families, staff and volunteers involved in our service.

Personal information about families in relation to Child Protection concerns will be shared on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy.

- Parents will have access to records kept in the service, but only in relation to their own child.
- All new staff and volunteers will be informed of our confidentiality policy and procedures as part of their induction programme and will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
- Information held in the service in relation to Child Protection Concerns will be stored in a separate locked drawer and will be shared only on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy and with Data Protection Legislation.

Confidentiality Policy for Parents and Guardians.

Including use of internet and photographic and recording devices in an Early Years setting.

- Children are not allowed access to the internet.
- Use of Photography and recording devices, has to be agreed by the parent/carer and the relevant form signed giving the service permission.
- Parents may not post on social media, photos or recordings, taken in the early years' service or on outings, of other children, unless agreed by the other children's parents.

Information will be dealt with, with the best interest of the child in mind and in accordance with laws and regulations. Those who keep data about your child have to comply with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Acts 1998 - 2003.

When there is a breach of the law or child protection concerns, childcare services have a duty to consult with the relevant agency. The service will be guided by the agency they consult with on how information will be shared and how confidentiality will be observed.

If a person has a concern for the welfare of a child that they can consult with Tusla or the Gardaí and that this will never be considered a breach of confidentiality. People

who consult with Tusla Social Work team or the Gardaí with a genuine concern for a child are protected by the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998*. This means they cannot be punished in law by being sued. If you consult with either of these agencies regarding a child protection concern, you should check with the agency you consult with in regard to confidentiality.

If a child protection concern is made known to the staff of a child care service, the staff are duty bound to consult with the Childcare Manager and Tusla Social Work or the Gardaí in relation to that concern.

Community Childcare Services

Community Childcare Services are run by volunteer directors. The directors will maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality in managing the service.

Facebook

The service has its own Facebook page and the manager of the service is responsible for the information the service puts on the page. No pictures of children's faces, comments or reference to an individual child will be posted without the express permission of the parent/guardian. Staff with private Facebook pages are not to post any reference to the childcare service on the page.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are staff member's private property. Staff are asked to leave the mobile phone in the staff room. When at work contact with staff will be made using the service contact details. Staff will not take photographs or record material in the service using their mobile phone.

Service Computer/Laptop

Information on a child on the laptop or computer is available to the parent or guardian in line with the information given in this policy. The laptop/computer is password protected and kept securely. The manager oversees the information on the laptop and ensures the information on it is stored in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

Observations / Learning Stories

Staff at the service assess each child's learning and development. Photographic and written records of this are kept for each individual child and for the group as a whole. Both the parent and the child will have access to these records and they will be discussed with the parent/guardian and with those who inspect the service to ensure such observations are undertaken. The parent's permission is sought at the start of the year to obtain and keep these records.

Events

Where group events such as a sports day or drama take place and parents want to record their child's participation in this, the expressed permission of all

parents/guardians is required. Where outings take place, a group photo will be taken for identification purposes as part of the outings policy.

Adverse Weather Procedure/Policy

A Place to Grow Childcare service will act on the National Guidelines warnings in relation to adverse weather.

If code red is issued nationwide due to Health & Safety concerns A Place to Grow Childcare will not operate in line with decisions made by the Minister of Children. Arrangements will be put in place for risk assessment following event, therefore allowing A Place to Grow Childcare to reopen and meet contractual obligations. A Place to Grow Childcare will notify parents and staff in the event of closure as soon as. All warnings will be communicated with parents and staff. Full Fee's will apply in these circumstances if your child is Pre-booked in on these days.

Infection Control Policy

A Place to Grow recognises its responsibility to promote a culture where health issues are discussed in an open and positive way to achieve high standards. The health and wellbeing of our staff and of children is of paramount importance to enable them to learn. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment for all children. We ask that you refrain from bringing your child to the childcare service if he/she is sick and/or displaying signs of illness.

We understand the needs of working parents and do not aim to exclude children from the childcare service unnecessarily. However, the decision of the Childcare Service Manager is final when requesting the exclusion of a child for illness or infection. Decisions will take into account the needs of the child and those of the group.

Should the Childcare Service Manager or Deputy consider the illness / situation to warrant immediate medical attention, the emergency services will be contacted to take the child directly to Hospital and the parent / guardian notified accordingly.

Staff will report any worries about a child's health to the parents/guardians immediately. Parents are responsible for keeping the childcare service informed about the child's health.

Parents will be notified by early year's staff if a child or staff member has a contagious illness. A notice will be displayed on the doors of any infectious diseases or illness in the centre. For further information and direction on responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases we will refer to the HSE document "Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities" and contact the infectious disease control hotline for guidance.

All notifiable infectious diseases will be reported to Tusla and the HSE upon the second case occurring within the school aged childcare service.

We ask parents/guardians to report all infectious diseases promptly to the centre so all families and staff can be advised of the situation.

A child or member of staff may not attend the centre if they have the following symptoms or contagious illness:

- Diarrhoea – more than twice in 24 hours
- Vomiting – more than once in 24 hours
- Acute symptoms of food poisoning or gastroenteritis
- A temperature of 38°C (100.4F) or over
- Severe earache
- Severe difficulty breathing
- An unexplained rash – extent and how long child has had it should be noted.
- Complaints of a stiff neck and headache
- Conjunctivitis
- Meningitis
- Scabies
- Chicken Pox, Mumps or Measles
- Impetigo
- Hand, Foot & Mouth
- Untreated Head Lice/nits
- Swine flu symptoms
- Covid 19 symptoms- until tested and returned as negative or if positive 14 days or following the directions and guidelines communicated by the HSE.

If signs or symptoms should be recognised while your child is in attendance in the service, you will be contacted immediately and asked to collect your child.

Please note that if your child is on an antibiotic they must be kept at home for the first 48 hours of their antibiotic. A child must also be kept at home for 48 hours if they experience any of the above symptoms.

Should your child miss days through sickness, you are still charged for their contracted days.

Immunisation records:

Children's immunisation records will be requested as part of the child record. All immunisation records will be kept on file with the child's record for the duration of the time that they attend the service. These files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Parents of children that have not been immunised will be notified promptly by early year's staff if a child or staff member has a contagious illness. A notice will be displayed on the doors of any infectious diseases or illness in the centre. For further information and direction on responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases we will refer to the HSE document "Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities".

Covid 19 Infection Control Policy- A Place To Grow

Aims:

This document is provided to explain company policy and procedure on Infection control to employees to minimize and reduce the risk of spreading infection.

Cleaning procedures/additional infection control measures:

We will ensure that hygiene and cleanliness within the center is of the highest priority at all times.

All toilets, changing units and surrounding areas are cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.

Floors, tables and equipment are cleaned and disinfected during the day and after each key carer group moves through activities.

Good hand hygiene practices reduce and prevent the spread of infection. Appropriate facilities and cleaning agents are available and both staff and children are regularly reminded to wash their hands throughout the day.

Safe working ways for nappy changing/toileting is in place with clear guidance.

All staff that come in contact with food will wear protective PPE and dispose of it afterwards.

Any infectious illnesses will be notified to all staff immediately, so that a controlled procedure to prevent the spread within the centre can be implemented.

Base Rooms and Equipment:

Where possible restrict the passing of toys between children, these toys should be cleaned and sterilized after each use.

Furnishings and fabrics, such as cushion covers, dressing up clothes, soft bodied dolls etc. are minimised and washed regularly.

Malleable resources such as playdough, sand and water will not be used in group play. Sand, water and playdough will be used under supervision on an individual basis.

All equipment both indoor and outdoor will be cleaned down after each use.

Room layouts/space and activities will reflect the need for social distancing were possible and all materials will be cleaned down after each use.

Service cleaning schedule

All surfaces and contact areas will be sanitised and cleaned down throughout the day. (these include door handles, key pads/switches, light switches, all floors/toilets, toilet seats/handles, wash hand basin/taps, tables/chairs in base rooms, furniture and equipment in office and all computer/Tablets/ Telephones throughout the centre. All cleaning schedules will be recorded and signed off daily.

Management of Infectious Diseases / Reporting/Recording of illnesses

Infectious illnesses can cause significant ill health among infants and young children. The purpose of employing infection control procedures is to reduce the risk, to a level where there is no longer a threat to public health.

An Infection control room has been dedicated to the management of a suspected Covid 19 case.

Maria Power is the elected Covid 19 representative for the service.

Should an outbreak of an infectious disease or COVID-19 occur, please refer to our Covid 19 Response Plan and guidance.

Resources

PPE

Cleaning equipment

Paperwork and polices

Review Date

Under continuous review during COVID-19 period and per public health guidance

Infection Control and Handwashing

- Hand washing facilities are available in each childcare room, toilets, food preparation areas and cleaning areas.
- Children can avail of the hand washing facilities when they need and they will be encouraged and supported to practice this.
- Wash hand basins should have hot and cold taps that are thermostatically controlled to ensure that hot water is no hotter than 43° to avoid scalding and facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Staff will encourage children to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating any food and after playing outside.
- Guidelines on handwashing are displayed in the Service. These guidelines incorporate visual images that are appropriate for staff and children.

Staff handwashing:

Staff are required to wash their hands when:

- They start of the work shift.
- Eating, handling/preparing food or assisting/feeding a child.
- Preparing meals, snacks and drinks.
- Playing, or handling items, in the playground – e.g. toys, sand, water;
- Handling secretions e.g. from a child’s nose or mouth, from sores or cuts, blood or body fluids (faeces, vomit, spit, nappies, pads, pus and urine)
- Handling or dealing with waste or rubbish
- Handling of raw meat
- The removal of disposable gloves and/or aprons
- After using the bathroom
- Cleaning the Service
- Washing/handling of soiled clothes
- Coughing or sneezing
- When hands are dirty.

Hand washing procedure:

- Hands are washed with warm water and liquid soap.
- Cuts are covered with water proof plasters
- A hand cream is used to protect staff skin.
- Nails of staff are clean and short.
- Alcohol hand rubs are useful, but they will not kill germs that cause diarrhoea.
- Do not wear jewellery on hands, a plain wedding band is acceptable
- Nail polish is not acceptable.
- Liquid soap dispensers are utilised within the Service.
- Dry hands properly with paper towels.

Handwashing should be performed as follows:

- Wet hands under warm running water to wrist level
- Apply liquid soap
- Lather it evenly covering all areas of the hands for at least 10 seconds. Include the thumbs, finger tips, palms and in between the fingers, rubbing backwards and forwards at every stroke
- Rinse hands off thoroughly under warm running water
- Dry with paper towel using a patting motion to reduce friction, taking special care between the fingers
- Use the disposable paper towel that has been used to dry the hands to turn off taps
- Dispose of the disposable paper towel in a waste bin using the foot pedal to avoid contaminating hands that have just been washed.

Head Lice Policy

Head louse infestation is a contagious condition, and when noticed in the childcare service must be brought to the attention of all parent/guardian/carers immediately. Children with head lice must be treated fully and completely rid of head lice before returning to the centre.

Immunisation Policy

When you enrol your child in our Childcare Service, please complete the immunisation section, in the registration form supplied. A copy of your child's immunisation record to be attached to your application form.

Families Opposed to Immunisation

Families opposed to immunisation are usually concerned with safety of vaccines, or are concerned about a specific risk/side effect, or have a child who has had an adverse reaction to a previous vaccination.

Our service will:

- respect their views and acknowledge and listen to their concerns;
- refer them to their doctor for information on benefits and risks of immunization;
- Respectfully provide information on immunization and on the exclusion policies the service follows for children who are not immunised.

Not all children attending this service may be immunised.

In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents will be verbally informed.

A dated notice informing all parents of any infectious disease outbreak, will be displayed on our notice board.

Non-Immunised Children

In the case of children not immunised, the parents will be asked to seek advice, information and support from their GP

Medical Administration Policy

The following guidelines are used at A Place to Grow when administering medication to any children who are enrolled with the childcare centre.

- Initially a parent must complete a form giving the early years staff permission to administer the medicine. The parent must also supply the childcare centre with clear instructions for administering the medicine.
- The administration of medicine to a child within the centre will always be witnessed by two members of staff.
- Prescribed Medication can only be administered if:
 - The child's name and amount of medication is clearly stated on the bottle.
 - The date and time it was prescribed is stated on the bottle.

Please note that children attending for a sessional period (maximum 3 hours) will not receive prescribed medication while in the care of the Early Years Staff. Staff will only administer medication related to a pre-existing illness e.g. Asthma, or to regulate a high temperature while waiting on parents/guardians to collect a child. In the case of long term medical conditions that require medication to be administered regularly, a health care plan will be devised by the parents and service manager. It will be displayed in each room to ensure that the correct procedures take place when caring for the child.

Parent's responsibilities

Prior to a child starting the service the parent must complete a child's profile form. Parents must:

- Provide details if their child has any medical condition, of emergency contact numbers and the child's doctor's details.
- Provide information on children's allergies and special dietary needs.
- Keep the service up to date on their child's medical needs.
- Provide properly labelled medications and promptly replace medications after use or upon expiration.

Sharing of medication in the service is Strictly Prohibited. Medication will not be administered to children if parents have not provided it specifically for them.

Allergen Policy

The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the childcare setting if: staff, children, parents, and physicians work together to minimise risks of exposure to allergens and provide a safe ECCE environment, for food-allergic children.

Family's Role

- Notify the childcare setting of the child's allergies.
- Work with the childcare setting team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the childcare setting, including the playroom, the kitchen, dining room, during childcare activities, as well as an Individual Emergency Plan
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician.
- Provide properly labelled medications and promptly replace medications after use or upon expiration.

Childcare setting's Role

- Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Assure that all staff who interact with the child on a regular basis understand food allergies, can recognise symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and work with other childcare setting staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic child's meals, educational tools, and arts and crafts projects.
- Coordinate with the childcare setting manager to ensure medications are appropriately stored, and ensure sure that an emergency kit is available that contains a physician's standing order for the use of an Epipen or equivalent
- Epipens should be kept in a secure but unlocked location that is easily accessible to delegated childcare setting staff.
- Children who are permitted to self-administer should be allowed to carry their own epipen.

Amber Teething Jewellery Policy

Under advice from the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate and the HSE Child Safety Awareness Programme we can no longer prohibit the use of amber teething jewellery in our service. This is due to the potential choking/inhalation hazard associated with the Jewellery.

Healthy Eating Policy

The early year's services aim to promote a well-balanced nutritious diet, which is essential for all young children.

In A Place to Grow Adamstown

- Parents are asked to provide a healthy and nutritious snack for their child/children to get at 10.30am approximately.
- Children attending for after-school are also permitted to bring snacks with them which must adhere to the healthy eating policy.

Please note that any special dietary requirements will be respected.

In A Place to Grow Raheen

- We provide a healthy snack and drink for our Pre-school session only.
- A hot balanced meal for children in full day care is available to be purchased from the kitchen on a month to month basis.
- Parents are to provide a healthy snack for children to receive at 10.30am in the Baby, Toddler and Wobbler Room. A hot meal from home or lunch will be offered to children at 12.30pm. A further snack is then offered to children at 3.00pm if they are attending on a full-time basis. All of these snacks must be provided by the parents/guardians and must be healthy and nutritious.
- Children attending for after-school are also permitted to bring snacks with them which must adhere to the healthy eating policy.

Please note that any special dietary requirements will be respected.

Meals Pre-Booking Form for Raheen

- Please note meal forms and payment in full must be returned to ensure your child receives their meals from the kitchen.
- Please note your child/children will only receive the hot midday meal if they are pre-booked on the meals booking form.
- Please note new meals forms commence every 4 weeks and not on a calendar monthly bases. You will be notified when a new meal form is due to commence.
- Please note you will not be refunded for any pre-booked meals regardless of whether your child attends on the day or not.
- An adult always sits with the children at meal times to encourage good eating habits, stimulate conversation and enhance the quality of the interaction.
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves, to help develop each child's independence.
- Drinkable water will be available at all times.

Bottle Making Policy

The following guidelines are put in place to support staff when making a bottle for any children that are in our care.

- While following clear instructions & guidelines from each individual parent on how to do prepare a bottle for their child, we must carry out this task in the milk kitchen & make sure that the area we are making the bottle in is sterilized.
- Some bottles may come in pre-prepared and so these are to be reheated in the milk kitchen.
- All other formulas are to be brought to the centre pre-measured by the parents/guardians for ease of preparation by the childcare staff.
- Before re-heating each bottle, remove the top and the teat.
- For 3 fl oz, heat on high power for 20 seconds, for 7 fl oz heat on high for 30 – 40 seconds.
- To check the feed is not too hot, shake the bottle and place a drop of liquid on the inside of the wrist – it should feel lukewarm, not hot. The bottle must be shaken thoroughly because the liquid at the top of the bottle and in the centre may be hotter than temperature felt when holding the bottle.
- After feeding, throw away any feed that has not been taken within two hours so as to prevent bacteria forming within the formula milk.

Child Protection Policy

It is the policy of our service to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in our service. At A Place To Grow we have a duty of care to children attending our service and follow the Children First Act 2015.

We do this by:

- Ensuring that our management and staff avail of training on Child Protection provided by the Health Service Executive and the Wexford City & County Childcare Committee.
- Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what they can expect from us.
- Making sure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised in accordance with our Recruitment Policies and Procedures.
- Applying for Garda Vetting for all staff, volunteers, students and any adults that may come in contact with children in our service.

- Letting parents know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.
- Having reporting procedures and a named designated person in place to deal with Child Protection Concerns.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are informed of the Reporting Procedures.

Child Protection Reporting Procedure

- The Designated Person to deal with Child Protection concerns in this organisation is: Lisa Keeling
- Should this person be absent, for whatever reason the deputy Designated Person is: Maria Power
- Should a child make a disclosure to a staff member or volunteer we have clear guidelines as to how that staff member or volunteer would respond.
- Should a child make a disclosure or allegation towards a member of staff, the matter will be investigated immediately following our staff allegations policy.
- Any member of staff or volunteer who has a Child Protection/Welfare concern will discuss their concerns with the Designated Person.
- The Designated Person is responsible for the recording of any such concerns.
- The Designated Person may consult with Tusla regarding a possible referral as well as making a referral.
- In the case of emergency or an out-of-hours situation the Garda should be contacted and those numbers are easily available to all staff and volunteers.
- It is our policy to inform parents/carers about any Child Protection/ Welfare concerns, unless doing so would put the child at further risk
- The appropriate verbal/written communication regarding Child Protection/Welfare concerns will be made to Tusla without delay.

Safe Sleep Policy

A ‘safe sleep’ policy is in place at this service, which facilitates each child’s individual need for sleep/rest. While parents are consulted on their child’s sleep routines, we ask you to remember that we are responsible for each child in our care and will always follow recommended safe practice.

All childcare workers will follow our Safe Sleep Recommendations, to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and the spread of infectious disease.

Children under 2 years old have access to a standard cot.

Children over 2 years have access to sleep mats/stacking beds/suitable alternatives.

We have consulted our local fire officer regarding the placement of sleep facilities on our premises.

A separate sleep room of adequate size has been provided for all children under 2 years. This room is in close proximity to the playroom and a viewing panel permits staff to monitor the children.

All under 2 years old attending this service have access to their own standard cot, which is of good design; solid and stable; has a recognised safety standard and is in good condition. We use well-fitting, firm mattresses,

As the following are not recommended, we do not use the following for children's sleep arrangements:

- travel cots/portable cribs (which are intended for occasional use only and the mesh sides are difficult to adequately launder)
- pillow, cushion, beanbag or waterbed – their surface is too soft and is associated with a significantly higher risk of cot death
- sofa or settee – young toddlers can roll, fall off and sustain an injury
- car seats/buggies – restraining harnesses can slip and cause hanging
- duvets or quilts – risk of over-heating

Safe Sleep Practice & Procedures

- Baby always put to sleep on back
- Feet at foot of cot (Feet to Foot)
- Bedclothes tucked in securely
- Babies clothes are loose and light
- 1 child per cot
- Bibs, bottles or toys removed
- No quilts, pillows or cot bumpers – we use cellular blankets
- Baby's head never covered
- Electronic monitor used
- Visual sleep checks recorded in a sleep log every 10 minutes. This records the time, the baby's position and who checked.
- Temperature – the sleep area is maintained between 16°C and 18°C. A wall mounted thermometer monitors the temperature in the room
- Lighting – blinds/curtains control incoming light

- Safety – no cot is directly adjacent to a heater, curtains or anything that might help the baby to climb out, or near blinds whose cords could cause strangulation
- Space – At least 1.4m² is allowed per cot, allowing adults unhindered access to each sleeping child. A minimum of 4.2 m² is allowed per baby room, with at least 0.5 m² between the cots.
- Linen is not shared – separate linen is available for each child and this is laundered weekly or when soiled.
- Linen changes should be documented.
- Sofas, beanbags, buggies are not suitable for children to sleep in.
- No travel cots will be used.
- All clothing with ties, including coats, hats, scarves, bibs or hoods will be removed before sleeping
- Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping
- Pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep.
- A sleep log will be maintained.

Nappy Changing Policy

It is the policy of our service and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that staff follow the nappy changing procedures correctly and that a high standard of hygiene is evident at all times.

- Nappies are to be checked regularly and changed every 2 hours or otherwise when necessary.
- A disposable changing sheet must be used on the changing unit for each nappy change.
- Children's nappies and other items are stored in individual compartments and labelled accordingly.
- Disposable paper towels are used to cover the mat, and for hand-drying purposes.
- Disposable gloves are provided and worn during nappy changing, however this does not negate the need for hand washing.

- Soiled nappies are bagged and disposed of hygienically i.e. sanitising unit or binned and removed from the nappy changing area
- The nappy changing mat is disinfected after every use.
- Anti-bacterial soap is provided for hand washing.
- Children are never left unattended when having their nappy changed.
- If required another staff member is always available to provide assistance.
- A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that the nappy changing area is clean and hygienic at all times.
- To ensure that nappy changing time is a pleasant experience for the child, staff members use this opportunity to interact with the child and provide one to one attention.

Toileting Policy

A Place to Grow understands that Toileting is a time of learning for children and all children must be treated respectfully and sensitively when using the Toilet. We aim that Toileting be a positive experience with a high standard of hygiene being promoted at all times. This policy is underpinned by the Child-care Regulations (Preschool Services) 2006 and 2016.

- To create an awareness and understanding of good hygiene practice, staff members emphasise to the children the importance of self-care for example: flushing the toilet, washing hands etc.
- Anti-bacterial soap and disposable paper towels are used for washing and drying hands.
- A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that children's toilets are kept in a clean and hygienic condition at all times.
- Staff treat toileting accidents sensitively, when Toileting accidents occur, reassuring and emotionally supporting the child at all times.
- Accidents will be noted and shared with families through the use of our Childpath App communication platform.
- We will work closely with the families when a child is toilet training and use a tailored approach for each child. We kindly ask that parents support us by communicating what works at home and provide spare clothes and footwear.
- Praise and recognition is used when children are being toilet-trained to encourage self-esteem and a sense of achievement.

- If a child shows any difficulty when using the Toilet on their own, the early year's educator may assist, once the child is comfortable with them doing so.
- Where a child requires a change of clothes the educator will provide them (if available in the child's bag). Assistance can be given but the Early Year's educator will promote Independence first. The child's privacy will be respected at all times.
- Potties are disinfected after each use, using disposable gloves. The Early Years Educator will wash hands after assisting a child, ensuring children wash their hands and keep the toilet area clean.

Risk Assessment Policy

- Staff members complete a risk assessment of the playground before entering with the children (i.e. check external gates are locked properly, check all surfaces of the garden, the ground area for stones and any rubbish, climbing frames for loose parts and ensure they are fit for use)
- Attendance Records must be brought to the garden and head counts must be done every 10 minutes. Head counts are also done before leaving the garden.
- Climbing frame area will have 1 staff member present at it at all times when in use.
- Staff must remain vigilant at all times when in the garden.
- Use of personal mobile phones in the garden is not permitted
- During the summer months, sun cream must be applied to the children before entering the garden, monitored and reapplied when necessary. Sun hats should also be worn for babies/wobblers.
- A detailed Risk Assessment is carried out monthly by a Staff member. Any Issues/concerns are flagged straight away to the Childcare Manager. The Childcare Manager must ensure all items on the list are dealt with.

Sun Cream Policy

The staff at A Place to Grow will ensure that children are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultra-violet rays in sunlight.

- Permission is sought from parents for the application of sun cream to their child/children at the back of each Child Record form. This must be signed by parents for cream to be applied.
- If parents do not sign the permission form or if sun cream is not supplied for their child/children when requested to do so, their child will be kept indoors during sunny periods to minimise the risk of sun damage.
- Where possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled at times other than when the sun's rays are most harmful.

- Individual arrangements will be made for children with medical conditions who are unable to wear sun cream.

Accident Prevention Policy

It is the policy of our childcare service to promote the health, well-being and personal safety of all children and adults involved in our service, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures.

Accident Prevention

- A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on a regular basis
- All new staff and volunteers must be familiar with the Safety Statement
- There are at least two adults on the premises at all times
- Children are supervised by adults at all times
- Care is taken to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected
- Staff know which children are present at any one time
- Furniture and equipment are laid out to minimise safety risks
- Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children.

Accident Procedures

- The First Aid Box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location which is known to all adults [see Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 Appendix C for contents of First Aid Box]
- At least one member of staff who holds an up to date First Aid Certificate is on the premises at all times
- Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency
- Minor accidents will be treated in the childcare premises and parents/carers will be advised of the injury and the action taken, when the child is collected
- All accidents even minor ones, are recorded in the Accident Book
- In the case of serious accident, the senior staff member will phone the doctor and the child's parent/carer
- If the child has to go to hospital before the parent/carer arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to hospital and stay until the parent/carer arrives

- The child's record card must be brought for reference

Accident Book

- Accidents, no matter how trivial they may seem, are recorded on our App. Parents are also informed of any accidents that happened to their child while in our care. It is important that all accidents are communicated to parents when collecting the child. It is important to remember that the care of the child is of primary importance in all instances of accidents.
- In the case of an emergency where we are unable to contact a parent/guardian, we have requested your permission to seek medical attention for your child should an incident require medical examination. Parents are asked to sign for this on the Child Record form. However, it is at a parents discretion if they wish to sign for this or not and their wishes will always be adhered to by staff.

Fire Safety Policy

- The service has all the relevant fire safety equipment recommended in the Dept of the Environment's *Fire Safety in Pre-Schools* booklet including fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and fire blankets.
- The fire safety equipment is checked annually
- Fire drill instructions are posted in each room
- The assembly point is clearly marked
- A fire drill is carried out with the staff and children every month
- A record is kept of all fire drills carried out.

Outings Policy

The service encourages children to become familiar with their environment and explore new situations. Outings provide active learning opportunities enhancing many areas of our childcare curricula.

- Appropriate, recommended adult/child ratios are adhered to – 1 adult: 3 children and insurance/safety requirements are also adhered to.
- A signed permission form is sought from parents in advance. This will also serve to detail the time and nature of the outing and any additional materials/food/clothing required.

Outings involving the children and staff are normally undertaken after a risk assessment has been completed. Outings to new places will always require a written risk assessment, however regular outings which have previously been successfully completed will be verbally re-assessed by senior staff. Parents are welcome to discuss any concerns they may have about an outing with staff. Children do not have to attend outings if parents prefer them not to.

Behaviour Management Policy

All children are with us to enjoy themselves, have fun and be cared for in a safe, happy and caring environment. The aim at A Place to Grow is to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and to learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending the service are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

- Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- Role modelling includes: Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, getting down to the child's eye level.
- The approach that is taken to any challenging behaviour is to discuss the behaviour with the child at her/his level and in a manner in which she/he can understand.
- Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate.

Challenging Behaviour

- The Early Years Services Manager will be made aware of constant moderate behaviour issues or challenging behaviour issues. If parents are to be told about any incidents of challenging behaviour this can only be done through the Early Years Services Manager and never mentioned in an off-hand manner at collection or drop-off times.
- If the child's behaviour is still a cause for concern after some considerable interaction and effort, parents/guardians will then be approached once more. This contact can only be made through the Early Years Services Manager who may in turn seek support from the Project Manager with regard to the matter.

Curriculum Development Policy

A Place To Grow Childcare service is committed to developing a curriculum that creates a child centred, play based environment which empowers young children to actively pursue their own learning. This process will be facilitated by adults who will provide appropriate, timely, balanced intervention as well as support, continuity and progression to encourage positive attitudes towards learning.

A Place To Grow Childcare Service recognises that the establishment of daily routines is essential for all young children in our care. We strive to provide a programme of activities which encourage the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative and language development of the children who attend the service.

Guidelines – Our Curriculum follows the guidelines of the Aistear Curriculum and Siolta Quality Standards and:

- Is ultimately based on the children’s emerging interests and is conducted through play.
- Is flexible and open to new approaches and ideas, on how to promote and meet the growing need of children.
- Recognises that children are learning all the time, and that children learn best when they are actively involved and interested.
- Includes a variety of activities that provides for the physical development of the children.
- Includes stimulating sensory experiences (touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell) appropriate to the child’s level of development.
- Encourages children to think for themselves, helping them to make their own decisions and find their own answers to questions.
- Provides an atmosphere that offers the children suitable challenges and stimulates problem-solving.
- Encourages feelings of safety, trust and emotional security to the children in our care.
- Helps children to develop self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.
- Encourages at all times, sociability, friendship and co-operation with others, through the provision of co-operative play and the opportunity for children to mix with siblings, same-age peers, younger and older children.

Afterschool Policy

- Children will be collected from Raheen primary school at 2pm Monday-Friday for Junior and Senior infants Children and 3pm from 1st class upwards.
- Children who attend from 2-3pm can be brought back to the school bus at 3pm if requested by parents.

- Children are welcome to bring a snack with them if they wish.
- Children are welcome to do their homework if they wish during the afterschool time however only 30-40 minutes of the session will be allocated to homework completion. After this time children will be asked to put away their school materials and complete their remaining homework at home. This is to facilitate the need for children's adequate rest and play opportunities.
- Parents can request for children to do all of their homework at home if they wish, there is no obligation for children to do homework while in the afterschool club but we will however encourage them to take part in a quiet activity during this time to facilitate other children who do wish to do their homework.
- It is essential for all children to be collected from the afterschool by an adult or persons specified on their collection list over the age of 18. **Under no circumstances can children be allowed to go home alone or unaccompanied by an adult from afterschool club.**

Equal Opportunities Policy

It is our policy to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved in our service and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, race, gender, language and financial circumstances; to children with special needs; and to minority groups and members of the Traveller community.

- Equal Opportunities Procedures
- Recruitment and employment of staff will comply with all relevant equality legislation (see recruitment guidelines)
- The service is open to all families in the community (see admissions policy)
- A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly check our books, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity and differences in ability.
- Special dietary needs of children and adults are catered for where possible
- We will challenge any statements or behaviour by anyone in the service, which are racist, or sexist or which reinforce stereotypes or which are in any other way derogatory to an individual.

Inclusion Policy

At A Place to Grow we actively promote inclusive practice in order to best meet the needs of the children, families and staff of our centre. All children are welcome to attend A Place to Grow regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances. Through inclusive practice, we aim to reflect our wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and

differences in each other. In order to achieve this, we actively engage with children, parents and other organisations as appropriate.

In order to provide an open and accessible service for all children and families, admissions are accepted on a first come first served basis where possible or in line with stipulations of the national ECCE scheme. For further information, see our Admission Policy.

Valuing Diversity in Families

Key workers regularly engage with parents to facilitate information sharing and to ensure parents are involved in planning for their child's learning and development. Information sharing between staff and parents ensures a partnership approach which happens in the form of daily communications as well as scheduled meetings as required.

Staff, children and parents work together to ensure that food served in our service meets the medical, cultural and dietary needs of each child.

Parents and children are encouraged to contribute to various aspects of our service for example providing information or resources illustrating aspects of their lives, culture or community.

Accessibility and Flexibility

An induction process is carried out for all families and children new to the service. This involves registration, information sharing about both the child, the service and the exploration of policies and procedures of the service.

Because the need of each family and child can vary, the service will respond to individual needs where possible, for example, period of induction, times of attending the centre.

Representation and Participation

The curriculum, activities, books, materials and environment are used to reflect the diversity of all children, families and the wider community. Where possible, these will be adapted as necessary to facilitate the inclusion of all children within the daily routine and activities of the service.

Staff actively discourage stereotyping of gender, culture, background or ability by facilitating non stereotypical play, and through the use of non-stereotypical resources and images.

We strive to provide learning experiences that are meaningful to each individual child and recognise varying learning styles and abilities.

Staff Recruitment Policy

The inclusion policy forms an important aspect of the recruitment of staff within the service. Applicants will not be excluded from being considered for a position based specifically on their need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic

circumstances. (as pertaining to the Equality Act 2004). Positions will be offered based on competency, qualification and enthusiasm for the position. Upon commencement of employment, staff will be given a period of induction to the service. All staff will be made aware of inclusive practice within our service and its importance. When possible, staff will attend training pertaining to inclusion, for example, behaviour management, equality and diversity, language development or special needs.

Complaints Policy

It is the policy of A Place to Grow Childcare Service to welcome any suggestions, recommendations, comments or complaints made by children or their parents in relation to our childcare service.

Any complaints made about the service will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner. The following procedures will be followed:

Complaints procedure

- Complaints should be made to the manager.
- Every attempt is made to resolve the matter as amicably as possible and to the parent's satisfaction.
- If agreement cannot be reached the parent may make a formal complaint in writing to the person designated to receive complaints which is Donal Redmond BOM Chairperson.
- The complaint is recorded.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and be given full details.
- If a complaint against a staff involves a child protection concern a second separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection procedures.
- The parent is sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom, and within what time limit. The person investigating the formal complaint will keep dated records summarising what has been said and done by those involved.
- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome he or she may make a written request to go to the third stage of the procedure, which involves an independent mediator or panel.

- The panel will include an external mediator e.g. a representative of the Wexford County Childcare Committee or HSE.
- This panel will not include any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member
- The panel, having considered all the relevant material and talked with all those concerned, will reach a decision and if necessary, make recommendations.
- The complainant and other people involved will be informed of the outcome.

Staff Absence Policy

A Place to Grow understands that from time to time staff will be absent from work. It is our priority to have arrangements in place to ensure that the service is adequately staffed at all times and that adult/child ratios are maintained. Absences include annual leave and/or unpaid leave, illness or emergencies. A panel of relief staff is available to work in both centres. These staff members have gone through the same recruitment process as all other members of staff and are qualified to work with all children in our care. From time to time, where cover is not available we may need to combine groups of children if child:adult Ratios allow. In an extreme outbreak of an illness we may need to give notice to close a room but the Childcare Manager will give advance notice.

Linking with the Community Policy

A Place to Grow recognises that each child is part of a larger community which is an integral part of their lives. A community is more than a location or set of people. We believe in a strong sense of community and will work together with those around them to support and help both children and families to be involved in the wider community .

- Raheen FRC produces a newsletter to help inform parents and the local community of events happening within the service and how this supports children's learning and development.
- It is important all children feel a part of the local community and begin to understand the sense of community. Children and families will be asked to join in local events which the service participates in e.g. family fun day etc.

<u>Policies: Review Date</u>	<u>Person who Reviewed</u>	<u>Next Review Date</u>
29/03/2023	Michelle Nolan-Manager	29/03/2024

• **Appendix 1: A Place to Grow Childcare Fees** nd .g.

Full payments

	Session	1-4 hours	1-8 hours	9 hours	9.5 hours	Hourly rate
Baby	N/A	€16.00	€31.00	€34.50	€36.50	N/A
Wobblers	€14.50	€16.00	€31.00	€34.50	€36.50	
Toddler	€14.50	€16.00	€31.00	€34.50	€36.50	N/A
Play-School	€14.50	€16.00	€31.00	€34.50	€36.50	N/A
Out of School	N/A	€16.00	€31.00	€34.50	€36.50	N/A
After School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	€5.00

ECCE Payment	
Session	€0.00
4 Hour	€4.00
8 Hour	€18.00
9 Hour	€21.50
9.5 Hour	€23.50