

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC011
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Aghada Community Playgroup CLG
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Upper Aghada, Midleton, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P25 X9K6
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Audrey Manning
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	13/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	27	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Aghada Community Playgroup CLG is a sessional service, that has been in operation since 2002. It caters for children aged two to six years and implements a combination of High/Scope and play based pedagogy. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from Monday through to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. Registered daily opening hours are from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. However, the service currently operates two morning sessional services; from 8.45am to 11.45am and from 9.00am to 12.00pm. An afternoon session is not provided at present.

The service is located in a residential area of Aghada, in east Cork. It is provided from a single storey, prefabricated building, which consists of an entrance area, two operational care rooms, adjacent sanitary facilities, an office, a kitchen and storage space. Beyond a shared canopy area, the children have the use of two spacious outdoor play environments, at the side and rear of the premises.

### Staffing

A total of eight adults are attached to the early years facility. Seven of the adults are involved in the direct care of the children and have each attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. The registered provider is not service based. Included among the staff members are two adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. In addition, a student was undertaking a work placement at the time of inspection.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of the child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider had assigned a person in charge to oversee the operation of the service. A deputy was also available to deputise, in the event that the person in charge was absent.
  - (b) The deputy was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived and the person in charge arrived later in the morning to facilitate the remainder of the inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the eight adults attached to the service were reviewed, along with those of a student, who was undertaking a work placement. The following information was noted:
- (a) Of the 18 required written references, 12 were on file from past employers, with records of validation in place for 10 of the references.

- (b) Six of the 18 required references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers and records of validation were also in place for said references.
  - (c) Garda vetting documentation was held for each of the nine adults.
  - (d) Documentary evidence indicated that two staff members had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of eighteen years and the required police vetting was maintained.
- (4) The relevant records were available to demonstrate that the seven adults who worked directly with children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) Records of validation were unavailable for the two past employer references that were held in respect of one adult.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The person in charge responded to state that the references had been checked but not recorded. The reference verification forms have now been completed. Going forward, all references will be checked with a phone call and a reference verification form will be completed and signed by the manager.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copies of the required validations were received.

### Summary Comment

The response from the person in charge was deemed to meet regulatory compliance with regulation 9.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service's Outings policy was assessed and deemed satisfactory.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, an adequate number of adults were noted to be available to the children.

(3) A sessional category service was provided and the correct adult to child ratios were maintained as follows:

Time	Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
10.25am	Room 1 (2 years and 11 months – 4 years)	11	2 + 1 AIM support
10.29am	Room 2 (2 years and 11 months – 5 years)	16	2 + 1 AIM support
10.56am	Room 2 (2 years and 11 months – 5 years)	17	2 + 1 AIM support

The student was not included in the adult child ratios.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
(j) Staff members advised that two of the children who attended may require prescribed medication while in attendance and written parental consent was noted to be in place in respect of both children. There was one completed administration of medication record on file for the current year.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

##### Basic needs:

- The mid-morning snack was accommodated shortly after 11.00am in Room 1 and was noted to be a relaxed, sociable and enjoyable experience for children. For example, the children were observed to chat freely and were assisted by the adults, as needed.
- Drinking water was readily available to the children throughout the morning; bottles of water, jugs and cups were accessible at the children's eye level.
- The children were observed to independently access and utilise the adjacent sanitary facilities, with supervision ensured by staff members.
- Each care room included a cosy area, to accommodate any child who may need to take time to rest.

- Children’s behaviour was managed competently by the adults, with minor disagreements addressed calmly, promptly and with an emphasis on acknowledging the children’s feelings. For example, when a dispute arose over play materials, the adult who intervened voiced her awareness of the children’s emotions and adopted a positive, reassuring approach in helping to resolve the conflict.
- Adequate space was provided within the indoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. As reduced hours of operation were in place following adverse weather conditions, outdoor play was not facilitated on the day of inspection.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

#### Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

- The gate that provided access to the grounds of the service, was maintained secure when not in use. The main entrance door was key locked from the exterior and required the use of a high-level door release switch, to exit from the interior. These safety mechanisms reduced the risk of unauthorised entry and the risk of a child leaving the premises, while unsupervised.
- The fridges in both care rooms were fitted with restrictive opening devices and a cupboard, which contained potentially hazardous items, also had a restrictive opening device in place.
- The children’s access to the kitchen was prevented; the entrance door to this area was secured when not in use, with the key maintained on a high-level wall hook.
- The first aid boxes were safety stored out of the children’s reach.
- There were no trailing cables or flexes accessible to the children.
- Firefighting equipment was tethered.
- Radiator covers were in use to minimise the risk of a child sustaining a scald injury.

### Infection Control:

- Dispensers of liquid soap and paper towels were easily accessible at the wash hand basins within the service. The children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet facilities and before beginning the mid-morning snack.
- Refrigerators were in use to safely store the children's perishable snacks.
- Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas.
- The care rooms, entrance area and sanitary facilities appeared clean and well maintained. Staff members were observed to undertake cleaning tasks such as sanitising, hoovering and mopping, after the children had been collected.
- Suitable wall hook storage was in place for the children's coats and bags, which ensured that such items were stored above floor level.
- Open windows in both care rooms provided a supply of fresh air throughout the morning.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children at the time of inspection.
- An emergency care plan for one of the children was displayed in Room 1. During discussion, the room leader advised this plan was regularly referred to, in order to ensure staff members' familiarity with same.
- The medication held in the service was noted to be labelled with the relevant child's name, was in date and was appropriately stored out of the children's reach.

### Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep during the inspection period.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction.

### Outings:

- The person in charge confirmed that outings from the service were occasionally undertaken and a suitable Outings policy had been devised.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

Warm running water was unavailable at the four wash hand basins in the children's sanitary facility and at one of the two wash hand basins in the staff sanitary facility. Temperature readings ranged between 10.5°C and 11.6°C. Cold water temperatures may impede effective handwashing.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

The response received outlined that staff have been reminded to turn on the hot water switch, when they arrive at the service. In addition, the tap covers in the staff sanitary facility have been switched to the correct taps. Going forward, the manager will check that the hot water switch has been turned on.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was forwarded.

### Summary Comment

The stated corrective action has addressed the non-compliance identified under regulation 23.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 25 - First aid

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### Compliance Information

(1) There were three staff members with up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and at least one of these adults was consistently available to the children.

(2)

(a) A well-stocked first aid box was available in both rooms.

(b) The first aid supplies were accessible at all times, should they be required.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate detailed cover for a sessional category service. Public liability, fire and theft and outings were included. The policy was valid until 27 March 2024.