

# 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>	Sharon Carey
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	30	PM	15
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
<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 full day care service, that is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme over 38 weeks of the year and operates three daily sessional services; from 8.45am to 11.45am, between 9.00am and 12.00pm and from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. Registered daily opening hours are from 8.45am to 4.00pm.

The early years service is situated 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 care rooms, adjacent sanitary facilities, an office and a kitchen. The children have the use of two outdoor play spaces, which are accessible via a canopy area.

### Staffing

The service is staffed by seven adults, including the registered provider. All seven are involved in the direct, day to day care of the children. Two of the adults are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme.

### 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 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 registered provider, 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 was the person in charge of overseeing the operation of the service. The requirement for a deputy person in charge was also met, with written information available to this effect.
  - (b) The registered provider was working at the setting when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the duration of the inspection. Examination of the staff roster confirmed the practice of ensuring that either the registered provider or the deputy was available on site during the hours of operation.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that one adult had commenced working at the setting since the previous inspection on 13 November 2023. This staff file was reviewed, along with a qualification in respect of a second adult, who, at the time of the previous inspection, had been working at the service as a student and had since become an employee.
- (a) Two written and validated references were required in total. Both of these had been obtained from past employers.
  - (b) None of the references on file were from sources other than previous employers.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
  - (d) Following review of the adult's curriculum vitae, police vetting was not deemed to be required.
- (4) Evidence to demonstrate the successful completion of a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education, was available in respect of the adult and in respect of a second staff member, who had previously worked at the setting as a student.

### 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.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) It was observed that there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.
- (2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection met the requirements of the regulation, as follows:
- During the morning, there were 30 children, aged 2 years and 11 months to 4 ½ years, in attendance between the 2 care rooms. Five adults were working directly with these children.
  - In the afternoon, a total of 4 adults were responsible for the direct care of 15 children, aged 2 years and 11 months to 4 ½ years. The registered provider was also available for the duration of the inspection.
- (8)
- (a) At least two adults were present at all times throughout the inspection period. This practice was also evidenced through review of the staff roster.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*

- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider advised that there were 44 children enrolled at the setting. A sample of 10 child records were reviewed and met the requirements from (a) to (i).

### 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)

#### Physical and material environment:

- Waist height tables and child sized chairs were in place, to facilitate dining and to enable children to comfortably engage in tabletop activities.
- Low-level shelving units ensured that items of interest were available at children's eye level and were easily accessible.
- Resources to promote creative exploration and mark making included chalkboards and chalk, pencils, crayons, paper, paint and a selection of art and craft materials.
- Construction areas were equipped with train sets, plastic bricks, handheld vehicles, connectable shapes and jigsaws, which supported children to extend their fine motor and problem-solving skills.
- In the home areas, the availability of play kitchens, doctor's instruments, dolls and accessories, encouraged imaginary play. Dress up clothes were also accessible.

- The children could choose from a variety of books in the cosy areas, which promoted storytelling and language development.
- Outdoors, the children had access to two interconnecting play spaces, which facilitated more active movement, messy play and gross motor development:
  - Tree swings, tree stumps, a mud kitchen, tyres and seating were available in the woods area.
  - The wider playground area included a range of ride on toys, seesaws, repurposed boats, a climbing frame, sand play, goal posts and a swing set.

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

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- A fruit snack, a mid-morning snack, lunch and an afternoon meal break, were accommodated at the setting, on a daily basis. Food for these mealtimes was predominantly supplied by the children’s parents or caregivers, with additional snacks available at the service.
- On the day of inspection, the children’s morning snacks consisted of sandwiches, bread rolls, rice cakes, cheese, yogurts and fruit, such as blueberries, bananas and oranges. Water and milk were provided by the service at mealtimes and drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day.
- Examples of the hot meals served at lunch time included pasta pesto with cheese, chicken with potatoes and vegetables and beef stew.
- As some of the children had food allergies or intolerances, the service operated a nut free policy. All of the parents had been alerted to this requirement and the inspector was advised that staff also checked the children’s meals and snacks each day.
- During discussion, the registered provider stated that if a child expressed that they were hungry outside of routine mealtimes, they could choose something to eat from their lunchbox, or a snack would be provided by the service.

### 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 access gate was found to have been appropriately secured, prior to the inspector's unannounced arrival. The main entrance door was also secured against the risk of unauthorised entry and that of a child exiting unsupervised.
- The safe storage of cleaning agents was ensured.
- The water at the children's wash hand basins was thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded temperature readings ranged from 33.6°C to 36.1°C.
- Wall mounted storage was provided for fire extinguishers.

##### Infection control:

- Wash hand basins were supplied with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers. Foot pedal operated bins were also provided for the hygienic disposal of used paper towels. The adults ensured that the children washed their hands before the mid-morning snack, after using the toilet and before the main hot meal was served.
- The available refrigerators were used to store the children's perishable foods.
- Labelled wall hook storage was in use for the children's coats and bags. This ensured that such items were maintained above floor level.
- Cleaning, such as sweeping, hoovering and sanitising of surfaces, was observed to be undertaken during the inspection.
- Open windows in both care rooms and in the sanitary facilities provided a supply of natural ventilation.

##### Administration of medication:

- Prescribed medication was found to be safely stored out of the children's reach and was in-date.

##### Fire safety:

- The service's fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.
- Fire exits were illuminated.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General safety:

The Garda vetting disclosures available for three of the adults who worked at the service, were not dated within the previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

The written reply from the registered provider stated that Garda vetting has been applied for, in respect of the three staff whose vetting was out of date. As a preventive measure, a reminder has been added to the service's calendar for September 2028.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The three updated Garda vetting disclosures were forwarded, along with a screen shot of the service calendar reminder.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted have adequately 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Evidence was available to demonstrate that two of the adults held current First Aid Response (FAR) certification and that at least one of these adults was rostered to work at the service during the hours of operation.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

A current certificate was available and demonstrated that the service was insured to provide full day care, for the number of children it is registered to accommodate. The policy was valid until 27 March 2026.