

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC029
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Name of Service:	Aughadown Community Playschool Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Church Cross, Skibbereen, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P81 DP68
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kathleen Keohane
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	09/10/2023
Date of Regulatory Compliance Meeting:	05/12/2023

No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Social Work Dept. Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M Carney
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Aughadown Community Playschool is registered to provide an early years care and education for children aged from 2 to 6 years on a part time and sessional basis.

It operates from 08:50am to 12:45pm.

The service operates from a purpose built, single storey, detached building situated within GAA sports grounds. It offers 2 large, interlinked playrooms, toilet facilities, adequate storage and a compact secured outdoor playground.

Surrounding on-site grounds allow for sufficient car parking to ensure the children's safe arrival and departure from the service with their families.

Staffing

The registered provider operated in a voluntary capacity and had employed 3 adults to operate the service. This included the person in charge, a deputy and a relief worker.

Each member of staff had Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training ranging from Level 5 to Level 6.

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.

Additional Information

A Regulatory Compliance Meeting was held on the 05 December 2023 to discuss a non-compliant issue which had not been addressed via the CAPA process. This is demonstrated under Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child in the body of this report.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, the deputy 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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 employed a person in charge and had designated a deputy to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge and the deputy were on the premises on the day of the inspection and were available to facilitate the visit. Examination of the staff roster indicated that both adults were present on the premise whilst the service was operating.

(2)(a)

There were 3 adults attached to the service. Each of their personal files were reviewed and the following information was found -

There was 1 written past employer references available.

(2)(b)

There were 5 written references from sources that the registered provider considered to be reputable.

(c)

There were 3 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file at Level 5 and Level 6 for the 3 staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)&(b)

Appropriate records of validation were not available

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The person in charge submitted the appropriate records of validation were submitted.

It was stated that going forward all written references will have a record of validation attached for any adult employed in the service.

Summary Comment

The documentation was reviewed and found to adequately meet the Requirements.

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 following policies were reviewed and found to be compliant.

Policy on the administration of medication, policy on accidents and incidents, the policy on infection control and the policy on managing behaviour.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2)

There were 8 children aged from 3 to 4 years attending on a part time basis with 2 adults in attendance.

The adult child ratio was correct.

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)

A total of 10 enrolment forms were inspected and each were found to be compliant in relation to specific subsections of Regulation 15, (a) to (i).

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

The above information was reviewed and found to be readily available and compliant in relation to (a) to (i).

(j) The service had a record book developed by an agency affiliated to childcare for the recording of all medications that are to be administered to the children. There were no entries.

A child that had been prescribed an emergency medication had all information correctly recorded but had not required the medication to be administered.

(k) The service had an accident/incident recording logbook that again, had been developed by an agency affiliated to childcare settings. The most recent entry was dated 15 June 2023; this involved a minor incident and the information had been duly relayed to the parent as evidenced by the parental signature

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service had developed a colourful leaflet which contained information detailed in Regulation 16 (a) to (g) to be readily available for parents, guardians and prospective families enquiring about the service.

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

- The service stipulated that the parents and guardians were to supply their children with all food and drink items. A healthy eating policy was adhered to, as observed by the healthy lunches being eaten. The children had sandwiches, wraps, chopped fruit and vegetables, yogurts and water to drink.
- The meal was eaten mid-session, at approximately 11:00am.
- The staff members sat with the children unobtrusively and joined in their conversation. They assisted with the opening of lunch boxes, cartons and peeling of fruits. The children were reminded to return recyclable items to their boxes to take home so that parents could see how well their children had eaten.

- Children were given sufficient time to eat and converse with their friends.
- On the day of the inspection each child was availing of the part time service therefore were offered additional snacks at approximately 12:15pm.
- The children were supervised whilst toileting as the facilities were situated in the hall.
- They were gently reminded to wash hands and discard paper towels.
- Cubby space in the playroom allowed the children to independently store bags, drink bottles, personal belongings and crafts to be taken home.
- Coat hooks were installed in the hall at child height to encourage independent dressings.
- The children had ample space to enjoy free play, socialise and enjoy the play opportunities available. In addition, they had access to outdoor space for a change of scenery and fresh air.
- The children were observed to be happy, relaxed and familiar with their environment and no sensitive behaviours were observed.

Physical and Material Environment –

- Aughadown Playschool operated from a purpose-built childcare setting which was clean, bright, airy and well maintained.
- Three large windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- Only 1 of the interlinked playrooms was in use, it was spacious and was laid out thematically to offer a wide range of play experiences to the children.
- A corner of the room was devoted to large construction blocks where the children were observed building or just practising balance.
- Floor play was observed with the children playing with trucks and cars, farm vehicles and small figurines.
- Tables were equipped with varying arts and crafts and small construction such as stickle bricks, jig saws and colouring to promote fine motor skill execution.
- The playroom was furnished with sufficient table sized tables for the children to sit both comfortably and safely.
- The room had many low open display units storing equipment and materials so that the children could easily access.
- A well-equipped home corner provided many pretend play experiences that ignited the imagination and enticed socialisation. This area was very popular with the children 'baking', 'caring for their dolls and cleaning kitchen appliances and utensils.

- Colourful murals adorned the walls along with the children’s arts and crafts and a very eye-catching ceiling model of the solar system.
- The rest area occupied a niche by the displayed books so as to prompt the joy of literacy whilst the children rested and relaxed. The area was furnished with matting and throws.
- The children had access to a well laid out compact secured playground. It had critical fall matting laid for the children’s safety and comfort. Apparatus included a climbing frame, basketball net, balance beams, see saws, ride on toys, chalk boards and balls and hoops.
- Sensory play included a sand table with ample sand and utensils for the children to enjoy digging and spilling.
- There was evidence of the children’s autumnal planting in raised bed containers.

Supporting Relations Around the Children

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was maintained with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members worked well together, and the children were familiar with the routine, for example the rap of a small tambourine indicated to the children that it was tidy up time or time for lunch.
- A local garda had visited the service during the summer term to share his skills and job role with the children.
- The service was closely integrated with the wider community, both staff members had worked in the service since 1992, therefore were closely connected to the many families, parents and children that had attended the setting. Previous attendees included Olympian rowing champions and a local politician which was celebrated by the service.
- Communication with parents about service issues was conducted via digital applications both in group and individual form.

Implementation of the Programme of Care

- The person in charge stated that they delivered a play-based curriculum with inclusion of the children’s emergent interest.
- Documentation evidenced that curriculum planning was attended to, for example topics included during group time the planting of tulips and daffodils.

- A visual daily timetable displayed in the playroom indicated that there was sufficient time allocated for welcome, work time, free play, tidy up, wash hands and lunch, story time, small group time and then outdoor play.
- Records were also maintained in relation to the children’s observations and progress in the service.
- On the day of the inspection the children were industrious, engaged and were particularly eager to participate in heads, shoulders, knees and toes with the adults.

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

- Aughadown Playschool had a healthy eating policy that requested that parents and guardians were to provide their children with all their food and drink requirements.
- Lunches seen being eaten were healthy and nutritious, for example there was crackers, scones chopped vegetables and yogurts.
- The children had access to their water bottles which were stored in a large crate in the playroom. They were observed helping themselves to their drinks to counter thirst.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Plates and cutlery were not provided, and a child was seen eating off the table.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The person in charge stated that cutlery and plates are now available for the children and that a staff member has been designated to provide the utensils.

A photograph of the items was submitted.

Summary Comment

Documents in the form of a photograph was submitted to the early years office, it was reviewed and found to adequately meet the requirements of the non-compliant aspect of Regulation 22.

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 main entrance was suitably secure so that the children could not leave the premises unsupervised and unauthorised access was restricted.
- Internal doors leading to the kitchen and storage areas were secured so that the children did not have access to potentially hazardous objects.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Staff members personal belongings were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- The curtained openable windows had safety latches applied so that the children could not climb out.
- Cleaning products were not accessible to the children.
- Units were suitably anchored to prevent falling on the children.
- Toys, play materials and equipment were visually in good condition without any pinch points or sharp edges.

Infection Control:

- The person in charge stated that the staff members were responsible for cleaning duties. The setting looked clean and well maintained.
- Sanitising units were placed in both the hall and in the playroom for the adults use and out of reach of the children.
- Good hand washing practise were observed with children washing hands after toileting and prior to lunchtime.
- The children had access to 2 separate toilet stalls and 2 wash hand basins, they were equipped with liquid soap, paper towels and toilet tissue.
- Step ups were available for the children's comfort.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered 33.4 degrees Celsius.

- There was an additional sink unit in the playroom which afforded the children extra handwashing facilities.
- Tissues were available for nasal hygiene.
- Non-contact pedal operated bins were in use.

Administration of Medication:

- In conversation with the staff members, it was established that they were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a child requiring medications.

Safe Sleep:

- The service was categorized as a part time service and was required to provide a sleep facility. The person in charge said that a stackable bed was used in the event of a child requiring a sleep.
- Individual linen was provided.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door was unobstructed.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- In conversation with the person in charge it was reported that staff were familiar with the procedures that are required to be followed in the event of a fire

Outing:

- The service had resumed outings and it was reported that the children had enjoyed trips to a local island and a local pet farm. Staff members were conversant with the service outing policy and had applied it to ensure a safe outing. The adult child ratios were maintained at 1 adult to 1 child.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

There was no hot water available in the staff members designated toilet; this posed a risk of cross infection. This issue was non-compliant historically and it was stated that a hot water dispenser would be installed for hand washing purposes as a short-term solution. Unfortunately, this practice was still in place and the dispenser did not contain hot water.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Infection Control:

The person in charge stated that hot water has not been installed in the adult toilet as there are no funds to meet the cost and the action has not been approved by the building management.

Summary Comment

Following a Regulatory Compliance Meeting on the 05 December 2023 to discuss the above non-compliance; it was agreed by the committee that the works would be carried out. The person in charge subsequently submitted 2 plumbers quotes dated 05 December to evidence that the installation of an under sink water heater was to be carried out.

This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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)

The deputy had an up to date first aid certificate on file which indicated that a course had been completed which incorporated a paediatric component. The expiry date was October 2024.

(2)(a) & (b)

There was a large clear plastic box first aid box which was stored on a high shelf out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff members. It was generously stocked with the recommended first aid supplies.

Prescribed medication was stored separately in a secured cupboard. This was checked and found to be in date.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no adult on the premises with an up to date first aid responder certificate (FAR)

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The person in charge stated that s first aid responder course had been completed recently with an expiry date of 25 October 2025.

A scanned copy of the relevant certification was submitted.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service maintained a record of their monthly fire drills on a template which was displayed in the playroom. The last drill was carried out on the 14 September 2023, there were 11 children present being supervised by 2 staff members.
- (b) A record was in place which detailed the number, type, and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The most recent service was conducted on the 05 April 2023 when the fire alarm systems, firefighting equipment and emergency lighting was serviced.
- (4)
- A fire evacuation plan was displayed in the playroom which provided details of the route that is to be taken to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was on file to indicate that up to 22 children were adequately insured to attend the service on a part time and sessional basis.

The expiry date was 27 March 2024.