

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC044		
Name of Service:	Baltimore Community Playgroup Service CLG		
Address of Service:	Fr. Cashman Hall, Baltimore, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P81VC53		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Sheehy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	15/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Child & Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork, 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	Not Applicable		

Description of service

Baltimore Community Playgroup Service CLG provides a sessional early care and education for children aged from 2 to 6 years.

It operates from 09:30am to 13:00pm daily.

The service is situated within a community hall in the environs of Baltimore, a coastal village in west Cork.

Facilities include a large playroom, toilet facilities and an outdoor play area.

There are sufficient care parking spaces for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families

Staffing

The registered provider has employed 2 adults to work directly with the children. Both have Quality Qualification's Ireland (QQI) in childcare training. In addition, the service has enlisted a childcare student who avails of work experience one day per week.

On the day of the inspection a transition student was present for work experience.

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 inspections 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, 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)

This was a community service, and the registered provider did not work within the service, however an adult had been appointed as the person in charge and an additional adult was designated as deputy as required.

(b)

On inspection of staff rosters it was evidenced that the person in charge and the deputy were on the premises for the duration of service operation.

(2)(a) & (b)

There were 3 adults enlisted in the service and a transition year that required written references.

There were 5 past employers written references on file with records of verification attached.

There was 1 written reference from a source that the registered provider considered to be reputable, with a record of validation attached.

(c)

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

It was a requirement for the transition year student to have a garda vetting disclosure on file as she was under the age of 16 years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for 1 adult that had lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file for 2 staff members at level 5 & Level 6.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b)

There were no references available for the transition year student.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation submitted.

The registered provider stated that going forward references will be obtained for all students availing of work experience in the service.

An excerpt from an up-dated recruitment policy stated that this issue was to be implemented.

Summary Comment

Documentation in the form of an up-dated recruitment policy was submitted to the early years office; it was reviewed and found to satisfactorily meet the requirements of the non-compliant section of Regulation 9.

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)
On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (3)
There were 13 children attending the service on a sessional basis aged 3 to 4 years. There were 2 adults present, and 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)
Each of the children's enrolment forms were reviewed and some of the information required under Regulation 19 was compliant, as described below -

- (a) the name birth date of each child.
- (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 a friend can be contacted during the hours-of-service operation.
- (f) details of any illness, allergy, or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
- (j) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

The following information was not available -

- (b) the start date was not entered on each child's enrolment form attending the service.
- (c) the cease date was not included in the enrolment form for each child.
- (e) authorisation for collection was not completed on 1 enrolment form.

- (g) General practitioner details were not recorded on 3 enrolment forms.
- (h) A record of immunisations was not stated on 7 of the children's enrolment forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation

The registered provider stated that the information above has been included in the children's enrolment forms. Going forward enrolment forms shall be checked for completion prior to filing.

Summary Comment

The Requirements have been met.

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

- (1)
The following records were available and compliant in relation to the service –
- (b) to (i).
- (j) There was a recording book to detail any medications administered to a pre-school child attending the service. There were no recent entries.
- (k) There was a recording book to detail any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. The entries were reviewed and it was evidenced that the information had been communicated to the parent as parental signatures had been obtained.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Information which included a record of experience and photographic identification was not available for the transition year student.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the student was no longer in the service, but going forward identification shall be requested for all students and filed for all students.

An excerpt of the recruitment policy was submitted stating thus.

Summary Comment

Documentation supporting that the non-compliance had been addressed was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

The Requirements have been met.

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 person in charge provider made available an enrolment brochure which was designed to provided information in relation to the service for both parents and prospective parents.

It had incorporated the subsections of Regulation 16(1) (a) to (g).

The person in charge stated that the information was available digitally also.

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 children were observed enjoying their lunch midsession at 11:30am, this was a sociable event. A system was in place whereby the children collected their own lunch boxes and water bottles and sat at a large table which had been set with plates, cutlery and place mats. A recycling container was placed in the centre of the table so that the children could dispose of waste. The staff members sat with the children and assisted with opening cartons and encouraging the correct table etiquette.
- Staff members supervised toilet visits and gently prompted handwashing and disposing of paper towels.
- Additional hand washing was observed after the children had played outside and prior to lunch.
- The children changed their shoes to indoor soft shoes and stored them in individual cubby space to encourage independence.
- Aprons were stored for use to protect the children's clothes during art and messy play activities.
- Each child had their own coat hook and cubby space for bags and personal belongings.
- Spare clothes were available to the children in the event of spillages.

- The children had access to a canopied rest corner that was furnished with soft matting, cushions, and throws. Displayed books were to hand so that literacy was encouraged whilst the children relaxed or opted out of scheduled activities if they so wished.
- There was generous clear floor space in the playroom for the children to enjoy free play, socialise and investigate their environment in a supervised manner.
- The children also had direct access to 2 outdoor play spaces for fresh air and change of scenery.

Physical and Material Environment –

- The service was situated in a spacious playroom within a community hall. It was clean, bright and airy with 4 openable windows which allowed for ventilation and natural light.
- The playroom was furnished with a sufficient number of child sized tables and chairs that were clean and well maintained.
- The room was laid out in a manner to encourage thematic play and provided a wide range of opportunities for play experiences, such as the dress up area, well equipped playhouse, office station, construction, art and crafts, trucks and cars.
- There was a wide range of tabletop activities to prompt and promote fine motor skill play, such as plasticine, jigsaws, small construction and peg boards.
- Displayed art works included trees in blossom, family photographs and an assortment of colourful posters.
- The children were observed enjoying messy play on the decked canopied area.
- In addition, a secured playground offered many gross motor skill play opportunities, such as the slide, 2 swings and ride on toys.
- To the front of the premises the children had access to a south facing sunny hard surface area where picnic benches and the children' spring planting was situated.

Supporting Relations around the Children

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child.
- Only low tones were used during communication and positive reinforcement was observed during facilitation of toileting and preparing for their lunch meal.
- Prior to lunchtime the staff members conducted a quiet time session, when tranquil music was played, the room was darkened and soft matting provided for the children to rest and relax after their busy morning.

- The person in charge stated that the service was closely integrated with the local community and a fundraising walk had taken place.
- In addition, outings had re-commenced post Covid for example to the local lifeboat station, Sherkin Island and a treat to the local pizza parlour.
- A digital application was operated to communicate with parents, both a general application for notices in relation to the service and individual application for parents

Implementation of Programme of Care

- A daily timetable was displayed to evidence that a wide range of activities were offered to the children, there was ample time allotted for free play, outdoor play, circle time socialisation and meals.
- Displayed templates indicating that short term and medium-term curricular activities were planned was evident.
- Records were maintained on each child and any specific programmes of care were implemented in line with health professionals written care plans.

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

- The service operated a healthy eating policy, which was adhered to as observed by the healthy, varied and nutritious meals being eaten for example, ham and cheese sandwiches, wraps, rice cakes, fruits and cereal bars.

Non-Compliance Information

- The children did not have free access to the water bottles and were observed asking for drinks when thirsty.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation

The registered provider stated that the children now have access to their water bottles.
A photograph was issued to evidence this practice.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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:

- Baltimore community Playschool was suitably secured so that a child could not leave the premises unsupervised.
- The main door and lobby door leading to the playroom were secured so that unauthorised was restricted.
- The staff members bags and belonging were stored out of reach of the children.
- Play materials were found to be in a good state of repair with no pinch points or sharp edges.

- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- The emergency exit door was unobstructed.
- The children had free access to the kitchen corner, it was observed that there were no hazards present such as sharp knives and that safety latches had been applied to kitchen units and drawers.
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Sanitising units were placed out of reach of the children for adult use.
- Good hand washing practise were observed with children washing hands after using the toilets, after messy play and prior to lunch.
- The children had access to 3 toilets and 4 wash hand basins which were clean and well maintained. The areas were furnished with step ups and pots.
- Liquid soap, and paper towels were available for hand washing purposes and strategically places hand washing posters were visible to the children to prompt the correct hand washing technique.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered at 39 degrees Celsius.
- There was a wheelchair access toilet and nappy changing unit available which were clean and well maintained.
- Adults had a designated toilet within the community hall.
- Tissues were readily available to the children for nasal hygiene.
- Non-contact pedal bins were situated throughout the service.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that there were no children in the service that required medication, however an appropriate recording book was made available in the event of a child requiring medications.
- Staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed when administering either prescribed or non-prescribed medications.

Fire Safety:

- In conversation with the staff members, it was apparent that they were aware of the procedures that were needed to be followed in the event of a fire.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- The fire exit was unobstructed.

Outing:

- The person in charge stated that the group had commenced outings. It was reported that the procedures to conduct outings were closely adhered to, for example adult child ratios were maintained at 1 to 1.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Visibility strips had not been applied to the glazed doors posing a risk of a child walking into the glass and sustaining injury.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing practices were at variance with the service policy, for example single use aprons were not in use and it was not stated on the displayed nappy changing guidelines that the children's hands are washed after nappy changing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted.

- The registered provider stated that visibility strips had been applied to the glazed door.
A photograph of this was submitted.
- A nappy changing policy was submitted to evidence that children now have hands washed after nappy changing and that single use aprons are used by staff members when nappy changing is conducted.

Summary Comment

The documentation forwarded to the early years office to evidence that the actions had been implemented were reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

The Requirement has been met.

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)

Records informed that 1 staff member had completed first aid responder training certification (FAR). The expiry date was May 2024. It was evidenced by the staff roster that this adult was on the premises on a daily basis so as to tend first aid as required.

(2)

The service had a well-equipped first aid box which was stored in the kitchen area on a high shelf out of reach of the children but easily accessible to the staff members.

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 person in charge made available a template which detailed fire drills that had been completed on a monthly basis in the service. A fire drill was conducted at the time of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(b)

Records informed that the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had not been service since the 9 April 2022. Thereby non-compliant as annual service records are required.

(4)

Signage to identify the evacuation route that must be followed in the event of fire was not displayed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation submitted

(b)

The registered provider stated that the service of the firefighting equipment was carried out and certification was submitted to evidence that the service had taken place on 22 May 2023.

4. The person in charge, on behalf of the registered provider sent a sketch to identify the fire evacuation route which was displayed within the service

Summary Comment

Submitted documentation was closely reviewed and found to adequately meet the Requirements of the non-compliant sections of Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

(1)

The service provided generous clear floor space for the children to enjoy free play, planned activities, rest, socialisation and investigation whilst attending the setting.