

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC142
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Name of Service:	Eileen's Playschool
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Address of Service:	8 Glincool Drive, Maglin, Ballincollig, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P31 E892
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen Murphy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23x440
Inspection undertaken by:	C Stokes
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

Eileen's Playschool is a long-established family run sessional service which operates from a purpose-built playroom off the family home. It is registered to operate two sessions from 8.45 to 11.45am and 12.15 to 3.15pm daily from Monday to Friday. The service is a home from home play-based setting with an emphasis on outdoor play.

Staffing

The registered provider is service based for part of the session. The setting is run by the person in charge and staff who all have major awards in Early childhood Care and Education. On the day of inspection, a student was also present.

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, 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
- (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 ensured there was a named person in charge (PIC) of operating the service.
- (b) In addition, there was a named deputy person in charge (DPIC). The person in charge was present on the day of inspection and stated that the PIC or DPIC were always on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place as outlined by the PIC.
- (2) The staff recruitment files were examined as part of this inspection.
- (a) When the recruitment files of all 5 adults was reviewed two written and appropriately validated references were available in respect of 6 past employers.
- (b) Two written and appropriately validated references were available in respect of 4 sources other than past employers.
- (c) A completed record of Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau was available for the 5 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was required and available for 2 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period exceeding 6 months.
- (4) A certificate of a major award in Early Childhood care and education at a minimum of QQI level 5, on the National Qualification framework was on file for 4 adults. The 5th adult did not require this as they were on a student placement.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3) The care room met the adult/child ratio of 1 to 11 with 15 children and 4 adults present on the day of inspection (inclusive of the registered provider and student).

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

Basic Needs

- The morning snacks were served at 10.15am and water was observed to be readily available. The snack comprised sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes, cheese, yoghurts, and fruit which was provided by the parents/guardians. Staff were observed to assist, sit and interact with the children during snack-time to make it a social occasion.
- The children in the preschool room were independent using the toilet and staff supported these children appropriately, with gentle reminders for handwashing.
- A quiet area in the preschool room was available for rest beside the library and sensory area with a child sized sofa.

- Children were observed to have access to the outdoor area for mobility on the day of inspection.
- There was a calm and engaging atmosphere in the rooms. Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their sense of safety and security in the setting.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The person in charge advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents, with an open-door approach and communication in person with parents at handover times.
- A social media application for parents was used to send individual messages and videos with for example, the Halloween concert. Group messages were also sent to communicate general information with parents/guardians.
- Observations on the children with photographs were maintained 3-4 times per year, shared and signed by parents.
- A parent/teacher meeting was held each January by telephone and the person in charge advised that meetings may be held more regularly when a child requires such support.
- Staff team meetings for planning etc were held daily and recorded in the setting's daily diary.
- The regular observations on the children contributed to the emergent curriculum based around the children's expressed interests. These interests link in with and informed the activities and themes of the month and were recorded in the settings daily diary.
- The adults were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection, with encouragement and praise for specific tasks in a warm and caring manner for example, during tidy up/transition times where nurturing and enthusiastic interactions were observed.

Physical and Material Environment

- The indoor environment was child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out in special interest areas with materials accessible to the children.
- Interest areas included a creative area with arts and crafts, painting and messy area including water play and play dough; a portable library with soft area; sensory area; home corner; construction area, tabletop toys including small world, puzzles, threading, pegboards; imaginative area with dress up, music area and nature table.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available.
- The outdoor area had interest areas and equipment including bikes, ride on toys, sand, tray for water play, a playhouse for sand and a clean playhouse, slides, climbing frame, boxes of diggers, blocks. Trees to play in and around and areas to create dens.

- There was a canopy area which was fully sheltered which accommodated outdoor play in all weather on a daily basis.

Programme of Activities

- The service offered a play-based curriculum and playful opportunities were supported throughout the early learning and care programme.
- The service had a predictable and established daily routine for children, with opportunities for child led activities and large group games.
- For example, the daily routine commenced with free play followed by circle time where the children enjoyed songs and counting and colours for language and numeracy development. This was followed by snack time, and story time, where there was an emphasis on conversation and interaction for further language development. The session was completed with 40 minutes approximately of outdoor play in a rich and stimulating outdoor environment.
- The service had a daily plan which is reviewed by staff after the session. A Monthly plan was available for inspection and the service emphasises children's choice and developing the children's independence.
- Outdoor play was observed to be enjoyed by the children who participated fully and wholeheartedly.
- Children were given towels to dry the outdoor equipment to develop their independence and free choice of play materials and equipment was offered for entirely child-led outdoor experiences.

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:

- Internal and external doors were secured on the day of inspection.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was observed to be free of safety concerns or hazards.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing with thermostatically controlled hot water, soap and paper towels for drying was observed on the day of inspection.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were available in the children's toilets for paper towel disposal.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed at the time of inspection. However, the person in charge advised that one child has a nut allergy and their parents have provided an auto-injector pen and training in its use to the staff, supported by a paramedic.

Safe Sleep:

- This service is a sessional service, with a quiet area for rest rather than sleep facilities.

Fire Safety:

- No fire safety issues were observed on the day of inspection. Fire doors were not obstructed, and fire drills were conducted monthly for the safe evacuation of the service.

Outing:

- This service does not conduct outings.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance for 22 children attending on a sessional basis valid until 27 March 2024

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From visual inspection the premises appeared of sound and stable structure, well-finished and weather tight.
- (b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. An appropriate security system with a secured entrance door to manage unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service was in place.
- (c) The service was adequately heated, lit, and ventilated. The room was a comfortable temperature, windows were opened for ventilation and natural lighting was supplemented with artificial lighting.
- (d) The premises was suitably cleaned and maintained in a good state of repair.
- (e) An adequate ratio of toilets was in place for children as a 1 to 11 ratio was in place, with 2 toilets and sinks for children. For adults there was 1 adult toilet, a 1 to 8 ratio was in place as required.