

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC147		
Name of Service:	Emma's Playschool		
Address of Service:	Marian Hall, Ballinhassig, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	T12 PN2X		
Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Higgins		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	V. McCarthy
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

Emma's Playschool commenced operating as a sessional service in the village of Ballinhassig, Co Cork in August 2023. The service has a designated outdoor play area positioned to the side of the premises. The service is registered to care for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age and operates between the hours of 9 to 12 midday.

Staffing

There are 2 adults attached to the service including the registered provider. On the morning of the inspection, the 2 adults were on the premises, and both were working directly with the children.

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 service had a named person in charge and a deputy that could deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider who was the person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a)(b) There were 4 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 2 adults attached to the service.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the 2 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available on file in respect of 1 of the adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of each of the 2 adults.

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 there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.
- (3)
On the morning of the inspection there were 2 adults working with 22 early years children.

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) SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- There were key adults assigned to the children who comforted and listened to the children respectfully as they the children carried out their activities. Individual assistance and supervision was provided to the children as they required it.
- The children bonded well together in activities such as singing and practicing for their Christmas concert which they were all very excited about.

- The adults listened to the children throughout the morning and instilled confidence in them by providing them with positive reassurance and praise for tasks well done such as hand washing, waving the material parachute together as a team and queuing up in a timely manner.
- The service operated in partnership with parents and guardians. General Information regarding the services' facilities and activities was provided to the parents/guardians monthly by means of a newsletter or by social media. Other information was shared daily with participating parents and guardians by means of a notice board in the main foyer.
- The inspector was informed that an annual Open Day at the service would be available to all potential parents and guardians and a parent's handbook would be provided to them by the registered provider.
- Parents and guardians were spoken to informally daily at drop off and collection times by the adults and formal meetings were arranged as requested by them regarding their respective child.
- The service carried out weekly and term team meetings regarding the planned programme of care being delivered to the children and records of the meetings were available for review. A diary was also available to demonstrate that the adults discussed and dealt with daily issues as they arose.
- The service was in the process of developing links with support bodies such as the Cork County Childcare Committee and Better start and was in contact with these support bodies.

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 door leading into the premises was kept secured to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The outdoor play area was secured by high fencing and a secured gate to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The door leading into the adult toilet was kept secured and this area was not accessible to the children.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelves out of children's reach.
- The radiators in the care room were provided with thermostats.
- The fire door was maintained unobstructed.
- Each of the 12 strip lights in the care room was provided with a protective cover.
- The low presses in the care room were fitted with safety locks.

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)
It was acknowledged that the service provided evidence that 1 adult had completed training in paediatric first aid.

- (2)
- (a) There was a fully equipped first aid box available on the premises that was wall mounted high out of children's reach.
- (b) The first aid box was always available on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- There was no adult with training in First Aid Response (FAR) available on the premises for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) Training in FAR is being organised to be carried out during January 2024. The registered provider has developed a training schedule to manage better the training requirements for staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The registered provider submitted copies of correspondence between her and facilitators of FAR Training to the inspectorate on 19 December 2023.

Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the registered provider relating to the non-compliance was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

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)
- (b) Records regarding the number, service and type of fire equipment were maintained on file. The records demonstrated that the fire equipment was last serviced during July 2023 and the wired smoke alarm last had a maintenance service on 29 November 2022.
- (4)
- Copies of the fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service were not available on file. The service had recommenced under new management at the end of August 2023 and no fire drill had been carried out since commencement.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) The registered provider stated in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action (CAPA) form returned that a fire drill was carried out at the premises on the 29 November 2023. She also stated that a fire drill will be carried out monthly in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a) The registered provider submitted a photograph of the fire drill record demonstrating that fire drills were carried out at the premises on 29 November 2023 and 12 December 2023.

Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the registered provider relating to the non-compliance was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The services' insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of children covered which was 22 per session, the start date, which was 28 August 2023, the end date, which was 27 March 2024, the category of service covered which was sessional service and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding, contents, public liability and fire and theft cover.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available on the premises. There were 2 toilet cubicles beside the care room for use by the 22 early years children. Mechanical ventilation was provided in each cubicle. There was 1 toilet and wash hand basin for adult's use positioned off the care room. Each wash hand basin was provided with liquid soap, paper towels and thermostatically controlled hot water for hand washing. The water temperature was recorded between 27°C and 31°C.