

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC228
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Name of Service:	Little Haven Union Hall Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	The Blackfield, Union Hall, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P81 PX70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Victoria Collins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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

Little Haven Union Hall Community Playschool is a community-based sessional service and is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. On day of inspection the children were aged between 2 years 10 months and 6 years and were availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 09:15 to 12:15 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose built, single storey, building situated within a GAA sports grounds in the rural coastal village of Union Hall in Co Cork.

Facilities include, an entrance area, a playroom, kitchen/dining room and toilets. The children have access to a secured outdoor play area beside the playroom. The GAA grounds provide ample car parking for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families. The 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 staff included the person in charge, a deputy and the named registered provider is a relief worker. The three adults who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 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*

(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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 3 staff members. The two staff were present on day of inspection and the relief staff is the named registered provider. The following records were available for the 3 adults:

(2)

(a) Of the required 6 references, 3 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 3 reference were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 3 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A police vetting record was not required as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 3 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the playroom.

There were 10 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 5 years present 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) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the children's registration forms. were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.

(k) The service had an Accident and Incident book. Each accident and incident record had a duplicate copy that the parent received at collection time following the accident /incident pertaining to their child. A number of accident and incident records were reviewed and were completed and signed by staff and the relevant parent or guardian. The parental signature indicated that the information had been duly relayed.

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 service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Self-toileting by the children was encouraged. A staff member was observed supervising and assisting where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting and messy play.
- Children were appropriately dressed while playing outdoors in a waterproof pants, wellies, coat and hat.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and it was observed that 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. Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.
- The service operated in partnership with parents, regular updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians via the services electronic system and at drop off and collection times. Staff stated parent/ teacher meetings are held annually. Ongoing observations linked to Aistear; the curriculum framework had commenced.

Physical and Material Environment

- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as art and crafts, imaginary play and tabletop activities.

- The indoor environment of the playroom was laid out in defined interest areas, including home/construction area, arts and crafts area, tabletop activities area and story time area.
- There was a well-equipped home corner with dress up and items to encourage pretend play.
- Tabletop activities included arts and crafts and playdough with accompanying play equipment and children had access to small and large construction items.
- Suitable seating was available beside the book area where books were displayed at child height.
- The layout of the room promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- There were two children's toilets and one designated adult toilet. Recorded air temperatures in the playroom and in the children's toilets were 20°C on day of inspection.
- There was a designated outdoor play area provided beside the premise. The outdoor play area had an all-weather surface. A number of resources providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills such as cycling, kicking, throwing and sliding were available in the outdoor play area from resources including a climbing frame, see saws, push and ride on toys.
- Sensory play included raised planting areas and utensils for the children to enjoy digging and spilling. One of the parents had provided wildflower seeds and the children were observed setting the wildflower seeds in one of the planting areas under the close supervision of one of the staff.

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 children's parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.
- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge. Each child had access to their own water bottles so that they could help themselves to fluids when they were thirsty.
- A staff member presented a plate of appropriately sliced apple and mandarin oranges for the children. The parents provide the different/seasonal fruit each week. Each child had a choice of taking some fruit or not for this fruit snack. The children were observed enjoying the healthy fruit snack break which was part of the daily routine in the service
- Healthy, nutritious lunches provided by parents were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.

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:

- There were no cleaning agents or equipment accessible to the children.
- The children had free access to the kitchen as this area was set up for the mid-morning snack, child safety latches had been applied all the required cupboards at child height
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playroom in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a timber fence and secured gate.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom and in the children's and adult toilet facilities. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before fruit and mid-morning snack, after toileting, messy play and outdoor play.
- There was a system in place to provide spare clothes for children who had had spillages or had vomited.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- The person in charge stated that there was one child currently attending the service that required emergency medication to be administered. There was a recorded care plan in place. The medication when checked had not exceed its expiry date. The staff stated they had received training in the administration of the emergency medication. The child had not required the emergency medication to be administered to date while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

- This service was categorized as a sessional service and a sleep facility was not required. There was soft seating provided beside the book area that encouraged children to sit and relax when reading or to opt out of activities if they so wished while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions.

Outing:

- No outings took place at time of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Paint was visibly flaking and peeling on the following wooden play equipment in the outdoor area. The peeling paint that the children had access to have the potential safety risk of choking or poisoning if ingested.
 - a) The two stand-alone stationary wooden seating on the spring coiled see saws.
 - b) The large timber climbing frame in the shape of a ship known as Noah's Ark.

The non-compliance regarding the timber climbing frame was outlined in the last inspection dated 18/04/2023. In the corrective and preventative reply (CAPA), the registered provider stated that the redecoration would not take place until the summer holidays of 2023 as it was dependent on fundraising and availability of their maintenance worker. However, it was found on this inspection that this issue persists and needs to be addressed as matter of urgency.

2. A doorknob was missing on one of the cupboards located at child height in the service entrance area. Where the doorknob was missing there was a sharp open pointed screw protruding from the door cupboard that had the potential to cause injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the person in charge the following was stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service stated that a committee convened a meeting to formulate a plan for funding the renovation of the play structure, 'Noah's Ark' and the see saw. They engaged a professional who advised that it can be restored. They have established a time frame over the Easter break that allows them to ensure the work

is completed correctly while also enabling them to fundraise. The person in charge committed to forward photos to the Early Years Inspectorate when the work is completed. The service will mitigate the risk of this issue recurring by implementing annual maintenance on outdoor equipment and conducting monthly inspections to ensure its safety and to identify any areas that may be beginning to deteriorate.

2. The service stated they extracted the protruding screw from a cupboard door in the service entrance area that posed a potential injury risk and replaced it with an appropriate doorknob. The staff will take proactive measures to prevent a recurrence of this issue by conducting routine inspections to ensure the knobs are secure. Additionally, they will maintain a supply of spare knobs on hand for immediate replacement should a similar situation arise in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The written statement from the person in charge is accepted as evidence that the work is planned to take place.
2. Photographic evidence of the new doorknob in place in the cupboard in the entrance hall area of the service was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory

Summary Comment

Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement regarding point two.

Regarding point one, a plan is in place to complete the work shortly. Photographic evidence will be forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate when the work is completed. This issue will be reviewed on 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 registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that one staff member held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 fire fighting 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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the morning of the 18/02/2025
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in April 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 22 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover