

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC370		
Name of Service:	Skibbereen Community Playgroup CLG		
Address of Service:	Gortnaclohy, Skibbereen, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P81 YN32		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Brien		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM 21
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		

Description of service

Skibbereen Community Playgroup CLG is a community-based service, that first opened in 2003. The service provides part time and sessional care and is registered to cater for children from 2 to 6 years and for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Registered opening hours are from 08:45 to 13:00 hours. The service is currently operating from 08:30 to 12:30 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates a school aged care service in the afternoon. The service operates from a single storey, detached, purpose-built property which is situated behind a national school within the outskirts of Skibbereen town in Co Cork. The service has a spacious playroom, an entrance hall, a kitchen, a storeroom and adequate sanitary facilities. The service has access to a spacious outdoor area beside the service.

Staffing

There were 8 adults associated with the service and 6 were employed to work directly with the early years children, including the person in charge of the service. The service manager/administrator and the registered provider were not service based. Two of the staff were employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or hold a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, (DCDE)

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 focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, and 28. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (3)

The registered provider had not informed the Agency in writing that the service was operating outside of the service current registration status. On inspection, it was found.:

(a) That the named person in charge was not currently working in the service and there was an acting person in charge in her absence.

(b) Change in the service registered hours of operation. Registered opening hours are from 08:45 to 13:00 hours. On day of inspection the person in charge stated, the service was operating from 08:30 to 12:30 hours each day Monday to Friday.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from registered provider and manager the following was stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(3)

The service has now informed the Agency in writing and the service has received approval from the registration office of the following changes to the service registration details:

(a) The registered named person in charge of the service.

(b) The service registered hours of operation are from 08:30 to 12:30 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The registered provider and manager have read up on all guidance on Tulsa Early Years Inspector Website and are now informed of their obligation to update the Agency in writing prior to any changes to the current service registration details.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(3)

A copy of the correspondence from the registration office stating the changes to the service registration details have been approved.

Summary Comment

Correspondence was received and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 8 (1) (3) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) An alternative person had been appointed person in charge in the absence of the named person in charge. There was an acting person in charge and a named deputy available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.
- (2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9. Recruitment records in respect of 8 adults attached to the early years setting were reviewed. The registered provider, service manager/administrator, acting person in charge, deputy, 2 staff were employed under Access and Inclusion Model

(AIM), named person in charge on leave and 1 childcare assistant. The registered provider and service manager/administrator were not office based

The following records were available for the 8 adults:

(a) Of the required 16 references, 6 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) The remaining 10 references were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file for all references.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 8 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 on file for the 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 7 staff members that worked directly with the children 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

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 four adults were working directly with the children

There were 22 children present in the morning, 10 children were attending part time and 12 children were attending sessional service with 4 adults in attendance. Twenty-one children were present in the afternoon with 4 adults in attendance at all times.

(8)(a)

It was observed on day of inspection, there were at least two adults present at all times while the service was in operation.

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 22 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;

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.

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 service for the first food break and the food provided by parents/ guardians for the second food break were observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- As the weather was fine and sunny both lunch breaks were eaten in the outdoor canopied area at a long rectangular shaped child size timber table with bench seating.
- This was observed to be a sociable time, the staff members sat with the children and assisted the children to open lunch boxes, peel fruits and open cartons.
- The children were given sufficient time to sit and eat their snacks in an unhurried manner.
- 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.

- Staff members supervised toilet visits were observed and gently prompted handwashing and disposing of paper towels. Hand washing was also observed prior to second food break.
- There was sufficient clear floor space in the playroom and in the outdoor play area. As the weather was fine, the children were playing outdoors for most of the inspection. They were observed enjoying free play, socialisation and companionable interaction in a supervised manner.
- The high adult child ratios allowed for the close supervision of the children at all times and minor behavioural issues were dealt with promptly.
- At circle time indoors, children were observed sitting on a large mat while a staff member read a book to the group called “The fish that could wish”

Physical and Material Environment

- The playroom was adequately resourced with a variety of play materials that were accessible to the children on low level shelving units, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities.
- The playroom had a designated cosy area for children to rest and relax as required. Nearby displayed books prompted literacy and quiet time. Other interest areas included, home corner, and a fine motor skills area. The room was furnished with sufficient child sized tables and chairs.
- An area of the room was dedicated to arts and crafts which included paints, playdough, gluing, cutting and sticking.
- There were generous supplies of tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as jigsaws, puzzles and matching games
- The premises was clean, airy, bright and well maintained. There were many openable windows to allow for natural light and ventilation.
- An extension to the service had allowed for a bigger well organised storeroom and a bigger staff kitchen that had been refurbished.
- There was a spacious designated outdoor play area provided beside the premise. The outdoor play area had a combination of an all-weather, tarmac and artificial grass 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, walking wall, see saws, a selection of push and ride on toys, balls and hoops.
- Sensory play included a sand and water unit with ample sand and water and utensils for the children to enjoy digging, spilling and pouring. There was a wooden tipi and a blow-up tent inviting imaginary play.

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

Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at both food break times on day of inspection.

- The service provided the following food for the children for the first food break on day of inspection. Freshly buttered toast and buttered cream crackers, slices of cheese, apples and banana and the children had their own water bottles.
- The children’s parents and guardians provided all food items for the second food break, such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables. and the children had their own water bottles.
- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge located in the entrance hall. The service stored the perishable foods provided by the service in the fridge located in the kitchen.

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 accessible to the children.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children’s reach in the playroom.
- Internal doors to the adult toilet, kitchen, and storage areas were not accessible to the children.
- Staff members personal belongings were store out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed by the premise, fences and gates.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the adult and children's toilets and nappy changing facilities. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place.
- Placemats were put on the table outside prior to eating.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting and outdoor play.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.

Fire Safety:

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

Outing:

- An outing from the childcare facility did not take place at the time of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the lobby area of the children's toilet and in the nappy changing area, children had access to water heaters, located under and beside the wash hand basins, with pipes extending from the upper side. To reduce the potential safety risk to a child, children should not have access to these appliances.

Infection Control:

2. A lidded pedal operated bin was not provided for the disposal of soiled nappies.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider and manager the following was stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A builder is contracted to make units as soon as possible under the three sinks in the children's toilet and nappy changing area that will enclose the water heaters and all the pipes so that the children will have no access to the pipes and water heaters.

Infection Control:

2. A new lidded pedal operated bin for the disposal of soiled nappies is now in place beside the nappy changing area. This will be checked regularly to ensure it is in a proper state of repair.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of a letter from the building contractor stating that the units will be installed shortly in the children's toilet area was forwarded to the Early Years Inspector.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the new lidded pedal operated bin was forwarded to the Early Years Inspector.

Summary Comment

Correspondence was received and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, Infection Control, No 2. of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Regulation 23, General Safety:

1. While a written contract has been made with a builder to complete the work in the children's toilet area. This work was not completed at time of finalising this report. This issue remains outstanding and will be assessed at the next inspection to ensure regulatory compliance.

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 certifications on file indicated that two staff members held current up to date training. The two staff members were on site on day of inspection

(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 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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 09 May 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 on the 03 December 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 50 children until 27/03/2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.