

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:	Claire Tobin		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Social Work Dept Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co 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

Skibbereen Community Playgroup provides an early years care and education for children aged 2 to 6 years.

It operates from 08:45am to 13:00pm daily.

The service is situated within a purpose built, single storey, modern building situated behind a national school on the perimeter of Skibbereen in west Cork.

The service offers a large playroom, kitchen, storage spaces, toilet accommodation and a lobby.

Car parking is available only on the public road.

Staffing

The registered provider has employed 5 adults to work directly with the children, two of which have been employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). Each of the childcare professionals had completed Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

In addition, a manager has been employed to conduct administrative duties off site, thereby not having contact 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 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*
- (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 did not work within the service; however, an adult had been appointed as the person in charge and an additional adult was designated as deputise 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 6 adults employed in the service in total. Each of their personal files were reviewed and the following information was found –

There were 11 written past employers 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 records of validation attached.

(c)

There were 6 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file, dated October 2022.

- (d)
Police vetting was available for 1 adult who 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 each staff member, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

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)
On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (2)
The service was categorized as a part time service. On inspection of the attendance register, it was recorded that 6 children were present on a part time basis from 08:30 to 12:30 pm. The remaining 13 children attended the service on a sessional basis. There were 4 adults present.
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)
The service used and completed registration forms that had been complied by a childcare agency. They included all the relevant information listed above. Each child's form was reviewed, and it was found that they were suitably completed and compliant in respect of Regulation 15 (a) to (i).

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 service maintained the relevant information in respect of the service in respect of Regulation 16 (a) to (i). Most of which was displayed.
- (j) The person in charge made available an administration of medication recording book to detail any medications that may be required to a pre-school child attending the service. Although a child attending the service had been prescribed for emergency medication, it had not been required and there were no entries in the medication recording book.
- (k) The service had a record book to detail any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. The logbook was reviewed, and it was found that the entries were accurately recorded and that the information had been relayed to the parents as evidenced by the by the parent's counter signature.

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

Information incorporating the subsections of Regulation 16 (1)a) to (g) for parents, guardians or prospective parents was displayed in the lobby. It was also available both digitally and in hard copy.

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

- Parents and guardians supplied their children with all their food and drink provisions.
- As the service was categorized as part time the children were offered a healthy snack about 10:00am
- As the weather was fine and sunny lunch was eaten in the outdoor canopied area at a long trestle table. 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 meals in an unhurried manner.
- Staff members supervised toilet visits and gently prompted handwashing and disposing of paper towels.
- Hand washing was also observed prior to lunch.
- Aprons were readily available for the children to wear to protect clothing during arts and crafts and messy play activities.
- Childrens coats were stored on low hooks in the lobby and cubby space was available in the playroom for the children's belongings such as bags and shoes. They were easily accessible to the children so as to encourage organised independent dressing.
- The children had use of a cosy rest area which had been furnished with 2 low mauve couches and co-ordinated matching cushions. Nearby displayed books prompted literacy and quiet time.

- There was sufficient clear floor space in the playroom for the children to enjoy free play, socialisation and encourage investigation of their environment in a supervised manner.
- The children had access to a secured garden to the front of the playroom. It was reported that extended play was encouraged so that the children could capitalise on the good weather.
- Generous adult child ratios allowed for the close supervision of the children at all times and challenging behaviours were not witnessed.

Physical and Material Environment –

- Skibbereen Community playgroup was nestled behind a national school, set in gardens surrounded by mature trees and shrubs. It occupied a purpose-built single storey building, which comprised of a large playroom, kitchen, storage rooms and toilet facilities.
- A spacious lobby allowed for the safe and supervised arrival and departure of the children.
- The premises was clean, airy, bright and well maintained. There were many openable windows to allow for natural light and ventilation.
- The playroom was furnished with a child sized tables and chairs that were clean and well maintained. In addition, there were many low display units which enticed the children to access resources and play materials independently.
- Wall mounted activities provided sensory and sound exploration.
- Thematic play areas were well developed and provided many opportunities for enriching play experiences such as the well-equipped home corner, with dolls and buggies to invite imaginative play.
- There were generous supplies of tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as jigsaws, puzzles and matching games.
- Work benches, dress up and construction play were available to the children to encourage socialisation, fun and investigation.
- An area of the room was dedicated to arts and crafts which included paints, playdough, gluing, cutting and sticking.
- Circle time space was generous and provided matting for the children's comfort.
- The children had direct access to their own spacious garden, which was laid to lawn for ball play, a hard surface area for ride on toys and artificial grass and critical fall matting for robust and gross motor skill play.

- In addition, the garden provided tepee's, tents, a small construction table and a dinosaur table to invite imaginative play.
- A canopied area was equipped as an outdoor playroom, furnished with a long trestle table and benches to allow for tabletop activities and the communal eating of lunches.
- There was a climbing frame, playhouses, slides, and a fixed wooden car equipped with steering apparatus.
- Sand and water tables were equipped with many utensils to provide fun and sensory play.
- There were fence mounted chalk boards.
- There was evidence of the children's planting in the raised beds.
- A mud kitchen was well stocked to provide imaginative outdoor dining experiences.
- A wet gear shed stocked items for protection that the children could utilise during the damp and wet weather.
- It was reported and observed that an additional outbuilding had been erected since the previous inspection. This was used as an office and zen den for children that wished to have opt out of the scheduled activities or hustle and bustle of outdoor play and enjoy quiet time.

Supporting Relations around the Children

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child, for example during one-to-one tabletop activities and small group engagement.
- Only low tones were used during communication with the children.
- Children's needs were readily addressed, for example the need for sun protection ointments and hats prior to being taken to the outdoor play garden.
- The service was closely integrated with the nearby national school and were invited to visit their organic gardens and observe their chickens during the term.
- Likewise, the service maintained close links with the neighbouring community and fundraising events had taken place, such as a fashion show for extension to kitchen.
- The service operated a digital group application for parents to receive notices regarding the service.
- An open door policy was in place, as observed on the day of the inspection when prospective parent were given a tour of the premises and advised of application details.

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.
- Records were made available to evidence short term and long-term planning of the curriculum for example June include topics such as father's day, graduation and discussion about big school.
- It was reported that the nearby national school had donated a large white board for interactive digital activities. At the outset of the inspection the children were observed thoroughly enjoying the songs and activities broadcast by the white board.

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 parents and guardians supplied their children with all food and drink provisions.
- Lunches were stored in the large fridge which was situated in the lobby.
- The children had access to their own water bottles to counter thirst as required.
- A well-practiced procedure was in place whereby the children independently retrieved their own lunch boxes from the fridge.
- A healthy eating policy was in place which was adhered to as observed from lunches eaten.
- Children were seen eating healthy and nutritious lunches such as sandwiches, cold meats and cheeses, rolls, savoury wraps, seasonal fruits such as strawberries, yogurts, rice cakes and chopped vegetables.
- Plates, placemats and cutlery were available as required.

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:

- Skibbereen community playgroup was suitably secured so that a child could not leave the premises unsupervised.
- Unauthorised was restricted.
- 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.
- 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.
- Openable windows were not accessible to the children and roller blinds had inconspicuous cords out of reach of the children.
- There were no low glazed units.
- The emergency exit door was unobstructed.
- Cleaning products were stored on high shelving 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 2 toilets and 2 wash hand basins that was installed at child height.
- 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.
- Training pots were available as required.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered at 29 degrees Celsius.
- Adults had a designated toilet which also provided a nappy changing facility if required. It was clean and well maintained.

- Protective gloves and single use aprons were available to the staff members.
- Non-contact pedal bins were situated throughout the service.
- Tissues were available to the children for nasal hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that the staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a child requiring medications.
- It was evidenced that the staff had completed training to administer an emergency medication as required.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door was unobstructed.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- In conversation with the person in charge it was reported that staff were familiar with the procedures that are required to be followed in the event of a fire

Outings:

- It was reported by the person in charge that outings had resumed post Covid and that the staff were familiar with the correct measures that are to be followed for outings to take place as per the service policy. For example, a visit to the local pottery shop was conducted and each child had either a parent or family member in attendance.

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)
Certification displayed in the lobby indicated that 1 staff member had completed first aid responder training (FAR) with an expiry date of May 2024.

(2)
The service had a well-equipped first aid box which was stored in the playroom on a high shelf out of reach of the children but easily accessible to the staff members. In addition, there was a wall mounted first aid cabinet for the separate storage of medications.

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 was maintained. The most recent fire drill having taken place on the 26 May 2023. There were 19 children present supervised by 5 staff members.

(b)

The service maintained a written record of the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the setting. The most recent service had taken place in July 2022.

(4)

A fire evacuation plan was conspicuously displayed to detail the procedures that are to be followed to leave the building in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was displayed in the lobby which indicated that the service was suitably insured to cater for up to 36 children on a part time basis.

The expiry date was the 27 March 2024.