

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC403
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Name of Service:	Teeny Bops Playschool
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Address of Service:	Glasha, Newberry, Mallow, Co. Cork.
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Eircode:	P51 VK4N
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michele O'Callaghan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	14/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Teeny Bops Playschool is a private sessional service operating from 9.30 am until 12.30 pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. The service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years of age, currently children attending are aged from 2 years 6 months to 6 years of age.

The service is located in Glasha on the outskirts of Mallow in North Cork. It operates from a room located on the ground floor of the registered providers private home, which has its own separate entrance at the front of the building where there is also a reception area and a children's toilet. There is a dedicated outdoor play area situated at the rear of the service and a carpark is available at the front and side of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single handedly and an emergency person is available, if required.

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 and safety. 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 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) (b) The registered provider operates the service singlehandedly and was available while the pre-school children were present in the setting.
- (2) The recruitments files for the registered provider and the emergency contact person were reviewed;
- (a) (b) Two references and two validations were available, for both adults, from both past employers and other sources.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for both adults.
- (d) An international police disclosure was available for one adult who had resided outside of Ireland for a period of six months or longer as an adult.
- (4) Documentation was available, on file, to evidence that both adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) Attendance records evidenced that the registered provider ensured that there was, at all times, an adequate number of adults working with the children.

(3) The adult child ratio was met. There were six children in attendance with one adult on the morning of inspection.

(8) (c) The registered provider ensured that as a single-handed operator a person familiar with the operation of the service, and in a position to provide assistance, was available nearby in the event of an emergency.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) All eight pre-school records of the children attending the sessional service were reviewed, each were found to contain the particulars (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review in the service by the inspector.

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;*
- (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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider and the emergency contact person was available in the staff recruitment files.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide was available on the Tusla certificate which was displayed in the reception area at the service entrance.
 - (c)-(f) Adults child ratios, type of care programme, facilities available, opening hours and fees were available from the service's parent pack.

- (g) The policies, procedures and statements required under Regulation 10 were available in the service's policies and procedures folder, located in the care room.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis was available from the attendance records furnished to the inspector.
- (j) While administration of medication forms was available the registered provider stated that none had been completed as no child had required medication.
- (3) The above records, in relation to the pre-school service, were open to review by the inspector in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (k) Contrary to the service's Accident and Incident policy there was no accident or incident report book available in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (k) Accident/Incidents templates are now available in the service detailing the accident or incident that occurred and the actions taken.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (k) A copy of the accident/incident report template was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (1) (k) has been addressed.

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:

- Food for the mid-morning snack had been prepared by the parents. The children were observed eating, crackers, ham and cheese sandwiches and fruit in bite size pieces in line with the service's healthy eating policy.
- Individual water bottles belonging to each child were accessible throughout the morning from a shelf in the reception area.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet area independently and washing their hands afterwards, the adult was nearby to provide assistance, if required.
- The adult working with the children was heard intervening to ensure positive play by reminding the children to use gentle hands while sharing equipment.
- Children were encouraged to manage their own self-help skills and personal care and were observed handwashing during the morning and putting on their shoes and coats at collection time.
- The children were observed sitting at a comfortable height in relation to the table on chairs which enabled the children to place their feet on the floor.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- The adult was observed engaging with the children in conversation in the home corner, using strategies to extend the children's learning and thinking including asking open questions and providing feedback.
- The adult was heard on a number of occasions encouraging, praising and being respectful of the children's efforts when engaged in activities including making puzzles and building with construction materials on the floor.
- Communication with parents was stated as taking place verbally at drop off and collection, which was observed on the morning of inspection, and by phone or text.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- A photograph of each child in the group, (Class of 2023), and community photographs of each child's home and the local national school were visible in the service, which helped create a sense of identity and belonging for the children.
- The room was divided into clearly defined interest areas including a home corner, puzzle, book rack, construction and arts and crafts which provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all areas of development. Additional equipment such as a castle, airport, farm tractor and animals were available providing opportunities for imaginary play.
- Toys and materials were stored in baskets on low-level shelving providing choice and promoting independence.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Observations which documented the children's needs and interests were furnished to the inspector, these helped to create a picture of the child's individual experiences in the service. The registered provider stated that the observations are used to inform future planning and also shared with parents.
- Scrapbooks were available for each child which included artwork and materials related to themes examples of which included "All about Me," Autumn, and Halloween."
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions throughout the morning in the home corner and construction areas and seasonal songs at group time including "We wish you a Merry Christmas."

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- (1) There was no rest/quiet area where the children could choose to sit away from noisy activities.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) A new settee has been placed in the rest/quiet area along with soft blankets where children can sit away from noisy activities and relax.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A photograph of the new settee and soft blanket was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(a) Children were not offered the opportunity to play outdoors on the morning of inspection. In conversation the registered provider stated that the children had not gone outdoors since the storms in November.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(a) Children now have access to the front garden and a side wooded area to play every day.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)

(a) Photographs of the children playing in the front garden, which is secured with two iron gates and in the side wooded area, were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 20 (1) (a) has been addressed.

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 to the service was secured upon arrival preventing unauthorised adults entering the building.
- The interconnecting door between the registered provider's private residence and the service was secured with a hook and eye fastening preventing children leaving the service unsupervised.
- The three windows in the service were inaccessible, preventing children exiting from them.
- The toys and equipment in the care room appeared in good condition.
- All flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.
- Storage cupboards were fitted with child proof locks preventing the children accessing hazardous objects.
- All waste indoors was secured in pedal operated bins.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use in the service were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, 35°C, dispensing soap, paper roll for drying hands and a pedal operated bin for the disposal of paper waste.
- Children were observed washing their hands before and after food and after toileting.
- The registered provider was observed disinfecting the table before and after food.
- Visual posters of handwashing were visible reminding the children of good hygiene practises and supporting the children with their personal care.
- Hooks were in use for children to store their personal belongings off the floor area.
- Perishable food was stored in the fridge in the care room, preventing the food from spoiling.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available, stored in its original container, and placed out of reach of the children.

Fire Safety:

- Firefighting equipment was secured to the wall in the reception area.
- The fire assembly area was easily identified at the tree in the front garden, a safe distance from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) A doll's house, the height of the children, was observed to be unsecured, posing a safety risk should it tip or fall on a child.
- (2) The fabric covering the nest swing in the outdoor area was covered in mildew, posing a safety risk to the children.

Fire Safety:

- (3) The main fire/emergency exit door was fitted locked with a key which had the potential to impede the safe evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency should the key be misplaced, and the door locked.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) To ensure the safety of the children the doll's house was removed. In future all furniture and toys will be anchored, where applicable.
- (2) The swing is not currently in use. When the repairs are being carried out in the outdoor area at Easter time the swing will be washed. Should it be necessary the swing cover will be replaced.

Fire Safety:

- (3) The main fire exit door has now been fitted with thumb twist cylinder to facilitate the quick evacuation of adults and children in the event of a fire.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) The statement from the registered provider that the doll's house was removed and in future all furniture and toys will be anchored, where applicable, has been accepted.
- (2) The statement from the registered provider that the swing is not currently in use and prior to reuse will be washed or replaced has been accepted.

Fire Safety:

- (3) A photograph of the main fire exit door fitted with a thumb twist cylinder was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) A certificate was available to evidence that the registered provider had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training, the expiry date of the certificate was recorded as 9 July 2024.

(2)

(a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was easily accessible to the adult in the reception area and was available while the pre-school children were present.

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 written record was available of the fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 29 November 2023.

(b) A written record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment. The date was recorded as 21 December 2022.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was located on the wall of the reception area beside the fire/emergency exit door.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) An up-to-date maintenance certificate was not available for smoke alarms in the service. Regular smoke alarm checks are essential to ensure the reliability and functionality of the devices in keeping children and adults safe.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (b) A smoke alarm certificate is now available for the service and will be renewed on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) A copy of the smoke alarm certificate dated 8 January 2024 was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The requirement under Regulation 26 (1) (b) has been addressed.

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 that the service was insured. The policy stated that the service is insured for 11 children on a sessional basis. The expiry date of the policy was recorded as the 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) The building appeared of sound and stable structure.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- (1) The outdoor play area was not maintained in a good state of repair. Panels from the fencing in the outdoor play area were missing and others were broken. In conversation, the registered provider stated that the damage had happened in the recent storms. This non-compliance was also observed on the last inspection, dated 3 November 2021, in which the registered provider stated in their response that the fencing would be regularly checked to ensure it was in a good state of repair, this was not found on inspection.
 - (2) The gate in the outdoor area could not be secured, the hook would not meet the receiver on the opposite side, posing a safety risk to the children.
 - (3) Screws were loose on the bottom of the gate, posing a safety risk to the children as they could be easily accessed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d) (1) (2) (3) The main outdoor play area is not currently in use. The children are currently using the secure area at the front and a side wooded area while awaiting repairs. The fencing will be repaired, and the gate will be secured during the Easter break. The screws have been removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d) (1) (2) (3) The statement from the registered provider that that the main outdoor play area is not currently in use and that the children are currently using secure alternative outdoor areas while awaiting repairs to the fencing and the gate, during the Easter break, have been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 29 have been addressed. The main outdoor play area fencing, and gate will be reviewed on the next inspection.