

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC427
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Name of Service:	Timoleague Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	Community Centre, Timoleague, Bandon, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P72 F884
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Name of Registered Provider:	Melissa Hurley
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	14/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	13
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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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Timoleague Community Playschool is a registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged from 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years offering a choice of part time and sessional service including the children partaking in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 08:45 to 13:45 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates from a section of the local community centre that was purposely adapted as a childcare setting. It is situated close to the National School and other amenities in the village of Timoleague, Co. Cork. The premise consists of one care room, a kitchen, office, storeroom, toilet facilities and an adequately secured covered and uncovered outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are 7 adults attached to the service including the registered provider and an adult on community employment placement scheme. The registered provider is not service based. Each of the 5 staff that work directly with the children has a major award 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times, during the hours of operation.

(c) There was clear evidence of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.

(2) The recruitment records in relation to 7 adults attached to the service were the subject of the inspection.

(a) Of the required 14 references, 11 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) Of the 14 required references, 3 were from sources other than previous employers, with records of validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 7 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Not applicable as no adult had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 5 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 in the playroom 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.
There were 17 children present in the morning sessional service There were 10 of the 17 children attending the part time service with 4 adults in attendance at all times. The adult child ratio was correct.

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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
(h) Electronic 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(i) The staff rosters for the week of inspection and the previous week were available for assessment. Both electronic and a hard copy of staff rosters were maintained. The rosters were in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.

(k) There was a hard copy Accident and Incident record book in the service. The Accident and Incident template included once signed, a duplicate copy of each accident and incident record for the parent /guardian.

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 and for the second snack for the children attending part time was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The person in charge stated that the service provided a fruit snack following the children's arrival to the service each day.
- Snack time was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment. The staff members offered appropriate assistance for example assisting with the opening of cartons as required.
- Tissue boxes were within easy reach for the children, which encouraged them to develop personal hygiene and self-care skills.
- The daily routine was observed to be mainly child led where the children had the choice of playing indoors or outdoors under the close supervision of staff.
- The staff members interacted with the children in a warm and caring manner. For example, calm tones of voice were used, and children were patiently guided during activities and routine tasks.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The person in charge stated 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.
- Adequate space was provided within the indoor and outdoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care room was spacious and well maintained. A selection of the children's artwork, along with their birthdays and family photographs were prominently displayed.
- There was an adequate supply of child sized tables and chairs available, which supported the children's participation in tabletop activities and mealtime routines.
- Shelving used to display play materials was positioned at a low height, which supported ease of access by children.
- The range of interest items on offer included the following:
 - Play kitchens with utensils, dress up clothes and dolls
 - Construction based materials, such as wooden blocks, plastic bricks, handheld toys and play tools.
 - Books located near the seating area.
 - Jigsaws, threading materials and connectable shapes.
 - Art and craft materials with an easel area.
- In the roof covered outdoor area, the children had the use of equipment such as sand box with digging toys, a playhouse, different sized building blocks, suitably equipped play kitchens. There was an artificial grass surface. Seating areas were also available to accommodate tabletop activities.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

- Entry to the service was via a fob key mechanism, which was in place at the entrance door to the preschool. These safety measures reduced the risk of unauthorised access. On the interior of this door, the door release button was positioned at adult height, which minimised the risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- The door to the office and kitchen were also suitable secured to prevent the children accessing same unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was secured by fencing and secured gates to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- The blind cords in the care rooms were safely anchored by tension devices.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- The radiators in the care room were provided with protective covers.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 30°C on day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- At the children's wash hand basins, there was a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot pedal operated bins. These facilities supported the practice of effective handwashing. It was noted that handwashing routines took place after the children had used the toilet, after outdoor play and before snack times.
- Tables were sanitised before mealtimes.
- Suitable storage was provided for the children's bags, outdoor clothing and footwear.
- Apron covers were available for the children to protect their clothing from spillages and stains whilst participating in messy play or painting activities.
- A fridge was available on the premises for the storage of the children's perishable food.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Safe Sleep:

- There were stacking beds with suitable bed linen available in the service for any child that required a sleep. There was no child that required a sleep on day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- All visible firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- In the written response received the registered provider stated that the required updated processed Garda vetting record for one adult was now on file in the service. A Garda vetting compliance checklist is now maintained in the service with the names of all adults associated with the service with expiration dates of garda vetting for each person recorded. There is now a monitoring system in place to ensure Garda vetting has been applied and returned to the service prior to expiry dates.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A copy of the required processed Garda vetting record for one adult was forwarded to the early years inspectorate department. A copy of the service Garda vetting compliance checklist was forwarded and deemed satisfactory

Summary Comment

- The responses submitted by the registered provider is accepted in meeting the requirement of the regulation.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that two staff members held current up to date training and both staff members were present on day of inspection.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box were 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 23 March 2026.
 - (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 were last tested and serviced in April 2026.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 27/03/2027. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.