

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC447
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Name of Service:	Tracton Community Playgroup Ltd
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Address of Service:	Tracton G. A. A. Hall and Pre-fab, Minane Bridge, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P17 KX47
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Saunders
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork. T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Tracton Community Playgroup Ltd operates as a sessional service that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The service caters for children aged between two and six years. The opening hours for the service are 09.00 to 12.00 hours, 09.15 to 12.15 hours and 12.30 to 15.30 hours daily. The service operates from two rooms that were purposely adapted as a childcare facility. One care room named the Hall room is situated in the Tracton Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Hall and the second care room named the Prefab room is situated in a prefabricated building positioned to the rear of the hall. There are two designated outdoor play areas situated to the rear and side of the prefabricated building and a secured ball alley area situated to the side of the GAA Hall building.

Staffing

There were ten adults attached to this service. This included eight staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. A ninth staff member was absent on the day of inspection, and the registered provider was not service based.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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*

(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 has ensured that there is a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge as well as the deputy person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

2.

There were ten staff attached to the service and ten staff files were assessed.

(a) Thirteen of the twenty references were available from a past employer and had been validated.

(b) Seven of the twenty references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all for staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting had been obtained for four members of staff who had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

4.

All nine staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The registered provider was not service based and did not need to hold a recognised qualification.

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.

Compliance Information

1.

The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

3.

On the morning of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations. There were four adults available in each room to work directly with the 35 children in attendance aged between 3 years and 5 years.

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:

(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.

The registered provider has ensured that a record in writing is kept in relation to:

(k) Accidents and incidents: there were six records of accidents since September 2025, these were inspected and found to contain evidence of parental signature.

3.

These records were retained on the premises and were open to available to the inspector.

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.

Compliance Information

1. (a) Basic Needs

- The staff working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment.
- Children had access to water at all times throughout the inspection. A water station had been set up in each care room with a supply of cups should a child wish to take a drink.
- Children's toileting needs were attended to promptly and staff assisted children when necessary.
- Staff responded to children in low tones and communicated with them respectfully throughout the inspection.
- Staff followed the interests of the children and evidence of the this was visible in the service.

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 entrance to each care room was secured to ensure no unauthorised entry or the unsupervised exit for children from the premises.
- All electrical flexes and cables were securely out of reach of children.
- All cleaning agents were stored in cupboards above head level to ensure children could not access them.
- The outdoor areas were secured with high fencing to ensure children could not leave unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised entry.
- Pull cords in the sanitary accommodations were safely secured.
- Children's play equipment, and furniture, were observed to be in a clean state and of good repair.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off of floor level to prevent trips.

Infection Control:

- It was noted that children washed their hands when returning from outdoor play.
- Perishable food for the children's lunch were refrigerated.
- Pedal bins were in operation throughout the service.
- Staff and children's sanitary accommodations were fitted with liquid soap, paper towels and thermostatically controlled warm running water. Water temperatures throughout the service ranged from 35.3°C to 42.4°C.
- Windows in the sanitary accommodations had been opened to aid natural ventilation.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were kept free and unobstructed.
- Wall tethered fire extinguishers were available in the care rooms.

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 has ensured that two adults had training in first aid response (FAR) and that these staff members were always accessible to the children. This was evidenced through the staff roster.

2.

(a)(b)The registered provider has ensured that each care room is equipped with a suitably stocked first aid box.

Each first aid box was easily accessible to staff should it be needed by the children at all times.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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. The registered provider has ensured that a record has been kept in respect of
 - (a) Monthly fire drills, the last recorded fire drill for the service took place on 22nd January 2026 and
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance records for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms for the service. It was noted that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm were last serviced in September 2025.
- 2.(c) These records were present and available to the inspector for review.
4. A notice of the fire evacuation procedure was displayed prominently within each of the care rooms.