

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC458
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Name of Service:	Wallaroo Playschool
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Address of Service:	10 Sunmount, Military Hill, Cork
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jo Kelley
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	10/06/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	11/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	10
Day 2	AM	31	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building , St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork, T23X440
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Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. M. O'Reilly
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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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Wallaroo Playschool is a community-based service that provides part time and sessional care. It is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. The service currently caters for children from 2 years 10 months to 5 years. Children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme are facilitated each morning in both playrooms and the playroom on the first floor in the afternoon. A school aged care service operates in the playroom on the ground floor each afternoon. Daily opening hours of the early years service is from 8.45am to 3pm.

Wallaroo Playschool operates from a detached two storey house that has been refurbished with two operational care rooms. A ground floor playroom called the Wallaby's room. The playroom on the first floor is called the Wombats room. Child sanitary facilities are accessible adjoining the care rooms. The premise also includes prefabricated cabins which are located to the side of the building and outdoor play area. The cabins were being used as a combined office and staff area. The outdoor play space is available to the rear side of the building. Since the previous inspection, a new planting and garden area has been provided at the entrance to the service.

Staffing

There were 26 adults associated with the service, of whom 16 hold a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. This included the 5 adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. The registered provider is not service based. The services, co-ordinator and deputy co-ordinator, 2 administration, 2 cleaners, 1 maintenance are not involved in the direct care of the early years children. Some of the childcare workers worked with both the early years children in the morning and school aged care service in the afternoon. There were 2 adults that worked with school aged care children only and a childcare qualification is not required. A number of the above adults are presently partaking in a community employment scheme including 4 in early years childcare, 2 in school aged care, 1 in administration, 2 cleaners and 1 adult assigned to maintenance in the service.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to Regulation 23 General Safety was issued to the registered provider on day of inspection.

A written response was received from the person in charge on day of inspection which mitigated the risk identified.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy co-ordinator/person in charge, staff and children who were present on the two days 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 service had a person in charge and named deputy persons in charge.
- (b) The deputy co-ordinator was present when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for both days of the inspection process.

(2) Twenty-six adult files were reviewed. This included the registered provider, co-ordinator, deputy co-ordinator 18 adults that work in the early years and school aged care service, 2 cleaners, 2 administration and 1 in maintenance.

- (a) There were 26 written and validated references on file from past employers.
 - (b) There were 26 written references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 26 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Fourteen police vetting records were available on file for the 13 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more, while over the age of 18 years. All the required police vetting records had been translated into English by a recognised translation company.
- (4) Sixteen of the 18 adults who worked directly with the children all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. There were 2 adults that worked with school aged care children only and a childcare qualification is not required.

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 at all times. It was observed there was a high adult child ratio in both playrooms on the two day inspection of the service.

(2) Taking into consideration the age range of the children present in the service and the duration of their stay, the adult to child ratios were maintained in line with the required ratios, as follows:

Wallaby Room:

There were 17 children aged three to six years with 5 adults in attendance in the morning session. There was a school aged care service in operation in the afternoon.

On day 2 of the inspection, there were 18 children in attendance with 5 adults in attendance in the morning session. There was a school aged care service in operation in the afternoon.

Wombats Room:

There were 17 children aged three to six years with 5 adults in attendance in the morning session.

There were 10 children with 5 adults in attendance in the afternoon.

On day 2 of the inspection, there were 13 children aged three to six years with 5 adults in attendance in the morning.

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 staff members were observed speaking with the children during snack time and using it as an opportunity to enhance social interaction with the children which promoted a relaxed atmosphere.

- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Independent use of the toilet was encouraged. The staff members were observed to supervise and assist where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting and outdoor play. The older children were observed to freely access and use the adjoining toilet facilities, as needed.
- Child height hooks and storage shelving was available to encourage independent dressing and organisation of their personal belongings.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children within the care rooms outside of allocated mealtimes.
- There was adequate space in the care rooms to accommodate a variety of play activities. A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated in each room and during outdoor play.
- The children were observed spending a long period playing outdoors in group and singular play closely supervised by staff.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Both rooms in operation were child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out with special interest areas with materials largely accessible to the children.
- There were an adequate number of child sized tables and chairs available in each playroom.
- The rooms had interest areas that included, a wide range of tabletop activities and games to encourage companionable interaction. There was a unit of dried coloured play rice with accompanying play equipment. There were cars and trucks, different sized blocks and a variety of art and craft materials. a fine motor skills area, a home corner suitably furnished with dolls, buggies, dress up and small utensils to prompt imagination and pretend play.
- Beside each playroom was a smaller room largely furnished with soft seating, books, and musical instruments. Staff informed me that this room was used for small group activity or if a child required 1:1 or to allow a child to opt out of play activities and relax if they so wished.
- Both care rooms had access to designated outdoor play areas which had a surface of rubber mats on hard ground

- There was ride on and push toys, playhouses, picnic benches, a mud kitchen, a sand container with accompanying play equipment, balance apparatus, see saws, slides and a climbing frame in both play areas to encourage the children to master gross motor skill play.
- Since the last inspection, the sloped ground surface at entrance to service had been developed and the children had assisted in the growing of flowers, vegetables, and fruit such as potato, cucumber, gooseberry and tomatoes. The high wall at entrance area had been cleaned to reveal a lovely old stone wall which enhanced the overall layout of this newly developed planting area for the children and adults in the service.

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

- On day of inspection the food provided by the parents/guardians for the mid-morning snack were observed to be healthy and nutritious with age-appropriate size quantities of food for example freshly cut fruit such as strawberries, grapes, apple and sandwiches, and yogurts with water to drink.
- The service promoted healthy eating and the food and drink provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- The children were observed to have age-appropriate size quantities of food for example, freshly cut fruit such as strawberries, grapes, apple, sandwiches, and yogurts with water to drink on both days of the inspection.
- The children appeared to enjoy the nutritious food provided by their parents/guardians and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace.

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:

- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- Low-level glass panels in the playroom located on the ground floor were covered with children's drawings and paintings, to reduce the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.
- First aid boxes were appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- The openable windows at child height were adequately secured and the windows at adult height were opened in the playroom and children's toilet and nappy changing facility on the first floor.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities were available across the care rooms. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place. Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack and after using the toilet and following outdoor play.
- Personal waste including used tissues and all cleaning waste was appropriately disposed of in foot operated pedal bins in the service.
- Non-contact bins were available for the storage of used nappies.
- The children had access to sufficient toilets and wash hand basins.
- A written cleaning record was available where high contact areas were cleaned daily after each session.
- Perishable foods were refrigerated in a refrigerator located in both playrooms.

Safe Sleep:

- No child was observed sleeping at time of inspection but adequate sleep equipment and bed linen was present in the service if a child did require a sleep while attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- On the inspector's arrival at the service on the first day of the inspection, the main entrance door to the service was not adequately secured. This posed a risk to the safety of children allowing unauthorised

access to the early years service. An Immediate Action notice was issued to the registered provider under Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of children in relation to this non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) the following was stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The lock on the main entrance door was replaced within 48 hours of the safety issue being identified on inspection. A notice was put in place, to ensure/remind all adults leaving or entering the premises to close the door behind them. An email was sent to all staff reminding them to ensure the entrance door is adequately secured at all times while the service is in operation. Management is currently in discussions with a fitter to replace the whole entrance door and with an alarm company to put in a whole new security system at the entrance to the service. At staff training day, the issue will be further discussed to ensure staff are reminded of the procedures to keep children safe while on the premises. When management are sending the information letter to families about the new school term, the service will remind parents and guardians that they should not enter the premises unescorted and if they are inside the building, they need to ensure the entrance door is securely shut when they exit.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence of the new entrance door lock and associated invoice. Photographic evidence of the new notice on the entrance door reminding all adults leaving or entering the premises to close the door behind them. A copy of the email sent to staff reminding them, for child safety reasons, to ensure the entrance door is adequately secured on always entering and leaving the premise, were forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, General Safety, of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) There were 10 adults in total working in the service that had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR). There were 3 to 4 adults present at any one time in the service, of the two day inspection that held a certified, First Aid Responder (FAR) training certificate.

(2) (a) There were sufficiently stocked first aid boxes available in the service, which was safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) At all times when the service was in operation, first aid supplies were accessible to the 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 16th May 2024

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on the 25th September 2023 The emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in 8th April 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 insured, with insurance for 42 children valid until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (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

(c)
The two playrooms and the children's toilet and nappy changing facilities were provided with a combination of natural light, through windows and artificial lighting. Light fittings were noted to have protective covers installed. There were openable windows in the playrooms, toilet and nappy changing facilities which allowed for a supply of fresh air.

(d)

When the children had left the service following the morning sessional service, the cleaners were observed mopping the floors of the playrooms, staff and office area.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)

There was an inadequate number of adult toilets in the service. There was 1 toilet and 1 wash hand basin designated for the adults in the service when 2 were required. On both days of the inspection there was 15 adults present in the service in the morning time.

The ratio is 1:8, one designated toilet and wash hand basin to every 8 adults in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) the following was stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- A standard toilet and wash hand basin which had been used for children while playing in the outdoor play area has been reallocated as an adult toilet. Staff have been informed of the change of use and a notice has been posted inside and outside of the toilet.

Management will look into the possibility of a longer-term plan to increase the on-site toilet facilities in the service. The site is small but there are options which management have looked at for a longer-term solution. The cost of this is prohibitive at the moment but if a capital grant becomes available, management will proceed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the second toilet and wash hand basin allocated for adult use only in the service plus signage stating same were forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 29(e) of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.