

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN040		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Ray's Playgroup		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Gallonray House, Maudabawn, Cootehill, Co. Cavan		
<b>Eircode:</b>	H16 X409		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	John O'Reilly		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/04/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM -
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.		

### Description of service

Little Ray's Playgroup is a community based early years' service located within the Gallonray House community centre. The service provides a sessional service for a maximum of 22 preschool children aged 2 to 6 years and operates for the 38-week school term from 9am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

The pre-school is situated within a room in the community building, and a designated outdoor play area is located directly off the preschool room. Car parking is provided to the front of the community centre.

### Staffing

There are four staff members employed in the service to include; the person in charge, deputy person in charge, a relief staff member and one staff member employed on a community employment scheme.

The registered provider does not work in the preschool 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid and Regulation 27 Supervision.

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that 2 staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection. The full staff files for these 2 adults were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all 4 staff members employed in this service.

(2)

(a) A total of 1 written and validated reference from a previous employer were on file.

(b) A total of 2 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 4 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for one staff member.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the three staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for one staff who works in a supernumerary capacity on a community employment scheme was not required.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) A second written reference was not available for one adult.
- (d) It could not be determined if police vetting was required, as no employment records were available on file for the two new staff.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) (b) The second written reference has now been obtained.
- (d) Not applicable as employment records demonstrated that the two staff had not lived outside of the state for a period of longer than 6 months, therefore police vetting is not required.
- For future new staff members, a checklist is now in place for relevant documents.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of one validated reference.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (a) (b) and (d).

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Two adults cared for 14 children attending on a sessional basis, aged 3 years 5 months to 5 years 2 months.

In addition to the above, a staff member who works on a community employment scheme was present in the preschool room.

### 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;*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) Employment records for the two new staff were not available on file.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

CV's for two new staff members are now on file. A checklist is now in place for new staff members.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Two staff employment records.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16 (1) (a).

## 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*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

#### **Basic Needs**

Heathy eating was promoted within the preschool service. Healthy snacks taken in from home contained sandwiches, bread rolls, yogurts, crackers, smoothies and chopped fruit. The children had access to their drinking bottles during their day. Snack time was observed to be relaxed and unrushed, and the staff sat with the children, using this time to engage in conversations with the children.

The children were observed to use the toilet independently with gentle reminders given to wash their hands.

Aprons were provided for messy play activities and observed in use when the children played with the water tray in the outdoor area.

A rest area containing two small child sized soft sofas was available for children to take time out to rest during their time in preschool.

The children availed of outdoor play after snack time and were dressed appropriately for the weather on the day of the inspection.

### **Supporting Relationships**

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families. The staff were observed to treat each child with respect and addressed each child by name.

The children appeared familiar with all the adults who cared for them. Many conversations about the staff and children's home lives occurred demonstrating the strong relationships between the staff and children. Conversations about where a child was going on holidays developed further when the staff showed the children the map of the world and where that country was, which led on to further discussions about other countries. At snack time the staff gave each child adequate time to talk about their interests which included a trip to the local shop, the children's dogs and baking a cake for a staff members upcoming birthday.

The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour and give praise where positive interactions occurred. Where disagreements over sharing toys arose, the staff used age-appropriate strategies and together with the children came up with suitable solutions.

Communication with parents/carers is predominantly in person upon arrival and collection time.

The staff team were observed to work well together, communicating with one another about what was due to happen next in the routine, which ensured transitions were smooth for the children.

### **Physical And Material Environment**

The preschool room was bright and welcoming, a large painted wall mural and children's art work along with family photos and a birthday chart were on display. Designated interest areas to include a rest area, book section, sensory play with playdough or porridge oats. Also a well-resourced home corner, including dress up clothing, table top areas for jigsaws, a grassed table top area for building and floor play areas with garages, farms and houses provided many areas of play and learning for the children. A table with dolls and hairdressing items was also set up and children were observed to enjoy playing in this area.

Play materials and resources were placed on low level shelves accessible to the children.

The children were observed to freely explore their learning environment, moving from one area to another at a time of their choosing. Countdown reminders were given by staff for transitions to the next part of the children's daily routine. At clean up time a song was played while children happily tidied up all the play materials in order to get ready for snack time.

The designated outdoor area had a ground covering of soft impact surfacing. A wooden play house was located to one side of the area with toys to include hoops, blocks, wheelbarrow, play houses and connecting toys available.

A mud kitchen and play BBQ with suitable play materials was provided. A plastic play house and a plastic climbing frame with slide were observed to be popular areas of play on the day of inspection, alongside water play and throwing and catching footballs and rugby balls.

### 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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- Upon the inspectors arrival the preschool room was appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The designated outdoor play area was secured by high level fencing and a locked gate.
- Toys and resources used by the children were observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Blind cords were secured out of the reach of children.
- Floor coverings were observed in good condition.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, bins and single use paper towel were provided at handwash areas. Appropriate handwashing practises were observed after children cleaned their noses, before snack time and after using the toilet.
- Waste bins were stored in an area not accessible to the children.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated by both trickle and mechanical ventilation units.
- Children's lunch boxes that contained perishable food items were stored in the fridge until snack times.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review and completed up to date.
- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for the four staff. However, vetting disclosures for three adults was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

Staff who's vetting is out of date have been applied for. A reminder is set on playschool devise for 2028 to remind staff to renew vetting.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Two garda vetting renewals.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

## 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

(2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises and was stored in an accessible and conspicuous location out of the reach of children.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) The certificates on file for the two staff trained in FAR had expired on 07 March 2025 and 21 March 2025.

It is acknowledged that the person in charge confirmed that FAR training is scheduled for May 2025 for one staff member.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## **Corrective and Preventive Action**

One staff member will start FAR training on Tuesday 13th May. Set a reminder on playschool device to remind us of when FAR training will need to be renewed.

## **Supporting documentation submitted**

Confirmation email from training company that FAR training has been completed for one staff member.

## **Summary Comment**

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 25 (1).

## **Part VI - Safety**

### **Regulation 27 – Supervision**

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

## **Compliance Information**

On the day of the inspection the inspector observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children in attendance.