

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL017
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Name of Service:	Busy Bee Playschool
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Address of Service:	Townparks, Lifford, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 FK61
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eleanor Kelly
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan & N Toner
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Busy Bee playschool is a privately operated preschool located in Lifford Co. Donegal. The service is registered to provide sessional and part-time care for children aged 2 to 6 years. There are two sessional services operating concurrently one from 09:00 to 12:00 and the other from 09:30 to 12:30. The part-time service operates from 09:00 to 14:00. The service operates from a single-story building located on the grounds of the registered provider's dwelling house. There are two preschool rooms with children's sanitary accommodation, a small office/kitchen, adult sanitary accommodation and a sensory room on the premises. Children have access to two outdoor areas on-site featuring a variety of surface types including tarmacadam, natural grass and bark.

Staffing

There were eight adults employed in the service to work directly with children. Six adults were present on the day of inspection including the registered provider who was working directly with the children. One adult was employed to provide support under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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 registered provider, 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)

The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.

(2) On the day of the inspection six of the eight adults employed in the service were present including the registered provider.

Eight staff files were reviewed, and the following information was available:

- (a) Thirteen written and validated references from previous employers for seven of the adults
- (b) Three written validated reference from reputable sources for two of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4)

Eight of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 preschool children attending the service.

(3)

On the morning of the inspection all of the children attended the service for sessional hours only and the following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In the Bumble Bee Room, three adults cared for 14 children aged between 2 years and 10 months and 3 years and 9 months.
- In the Busy Bee room, three adults cared for 12 children aged 3 years to 4 years and 10 months.

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

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Need

- The service had a healthy eating policy in place. Children's lunches and snacks were brought in from home. On the morning of the inspection, children were observed enjoying sandwiches, crackers and a selection of fruits and dairy products. Snack time was relaxed with staff members sitting with the children and engaging in social conversation.
- Children's individual drink bottles were available to them throughout the session. Water was available to children outdoors.
- Children were supported to use the toilet and handwashing facilities independently with staff providing support when required.
- Individual inclusion plans were implemented in line with the child's own needs. The plans detailed the developmental stage of the child and the interventions needed by the staff to always ensure the child's learning in the service.
- All children in the preschool had access to the outdoor area on the morning of the inspection.
- Outdoor clothing and wellingtons were available for all children for outdoor play.

Supporting relationships

- A key worker system was in place in the service with named staff assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with children as evidenced through documentation.
- The inspector observed the staff speaking kindly to the children throughout the morning, praising the children's efforts and achievements and offering comfort and support to any child who required it.

- Communication with parents is facilitated at drop off and pick up times which is used to exchange information with parents in relation to the child's day and development.
- The staff members were observed to work well as a team, frequently collaborating with each other in relation to activities and children's needs.
- When minor disagreements occurred between the children, staff members gently intervened and provided support and redirection to the children.

Physical and material environment

- Both the Busy Bees and Bumble Bees rooms were decorated with Christmas themed posters and artwork created by the children. The rooms contained a number of well-defined interest areas to develop all areas of children's development. The home corners in both preschool rooms were well stocked with play kitchens, utensils, real life props and play pots and pans.
- Materials such as jigsaws and boxes with transport vehicles, farmyards animals, train sets, and open-ended wooden blocks, were stored in trays on low level shelving which was within the children's reach.
- Sensory trays containing Christmas figurines and red and white pasta were available for open ended play.
- Homemade modelling dough was available to the children with an assortment of rollers, and themed cutters.
- An art area containing a variety of prewriting materials such as mini blackboard and chalk and open-ended junk art loose parts were available to the children.
- A range of books were available in a library area, and two child sized sofa's were available to provide a cosy space for the children to rest while reading.
- There were two fully enclosed outdoor areas in the service. One area had a tarmac surface which allowed the children to utilise a selection of ride on trikes, balance bikes and scooters. The second outdoor area had a grass and natural bark surface and contained a swing set and climbing structure.

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 was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials and equipment were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°Celsius in each of the sanitary areas and handwashing sinks in the preschool rooms
- Temperature reducing medicines, cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall fencing and a bolted gate.
- Medical care plans were in place and available for children who required them.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes in both preschool rooms.
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be maintained and clean with up to date cleaning charts available.
- In the sanitary accomodation the mechanical ventilation was in working order.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day on the inspection no medicine was administered to any child. On discussion with staff in the preschool rooms, the inspector was informed of the correct procedures to be followed should a child require medication.
- Records of previously administered medication were available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- On both sofa's in the preschool rooms, repair patching had become loose, preventing the area from being cleaned effectively.
- The foot operated pedal bin in the busy bees sanitary accomodation was not working, resulting in paper towels being disposed of on the floor and on the sink unit leading to a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Both sofa's have been removed and replaced with cushions and bean bags with removable covers. The covers will be cleaned once per week or earlier if required.
2. The bin has been replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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)

One adult was a trained First Aid Responder (FAR). Records demonstrated that at least one adult, trained in first aid, was available to the children at all times.

(2)(a)(b)

There were two suitably equipped first aid boxes available in the service, one in each care room. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

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-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (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)
- (a) A record of fire drills was kept by the service with the most recent drill carried out on 28 November 2025.
 - (b) Records were available to evidence that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 12 December 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced on 15 August 2025.
- (2)(c)
- The registered provider ensured the records were available for inspection by the inspector.
- (4)
- Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service, in each care room.

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 adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 40 children up to 27 March 2026.