

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL047			
Name of Service:	Glenties Community Playgroup Ltd			
Address of Service:	Glen Rd, Glenties, Co. Donegal			
Eircode:	F94 D622			
Name of Registered Provider:	Josephine Meehan			
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional			
Date(s) of Inspection:	19/09/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	23
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94			
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo and Y Coyne			
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager			

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

Glenties Community Playgroup Ltd is located in Glenties, Co. Donegal. It is a non-profit preschool service offering a full day care and sessional pre-school service to families in the community. The service operates from a former primary school building on the outskirts of the town which has been purposely adapted for use as a pre-school premises. There are three care rooms: the Baby Room, the Junior Room and the Senior Room. The service is operational for 49 weeks of the year and accommodates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme over a 38-week period. A school age childcare service is also provided on the premises.

Staffing

The service manager confirmed that there are 10 adults who work in the service. There were 7 adults present on the day of inspection, 6 of whom were working directly with the children. The service manager worked between all rooms in a supernumerary capacity.

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 areas of governance, and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 19 Health, welfare and development of child, 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of children, 25 First Aid and 26 Fire safety measures.

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

A referral was made to the local Environmental Health Office regarding the mealtimes. It is acknowledged that the Environmental Health Office has inspected the service, and the matter has now been addressed.

Acknowledgments

The inspector(s) wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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
- (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 premise throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2) The records of 10 staff employed in the service were reviewed.

The following vetting information was available for all 10 staff members:

- (a) 6 written validated references from past employers for 3 staff members.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for 10 staff.
- (d) The required international police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Certification of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or above was available for the 10 staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that each employee is suitable and competent.

2 (a)

- References for 6 staff members were available, however these were not validated prior to the employees start date.
- One staff member had no reference on file.

2 (d)

- The employment history records of 4 staff members showed gaps in employment, therefore it could not be ascertained if International Police Vetting was required.
- There was no employment history record on file for one staff member, therefore it could not be ascertained if International Police Vetting was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

2 (a)

Review of staff files completed and annual review on all staff files will be completed by the person in charge.

A new practice is put in place to ensure that all new staff members reference is validated before employment commences within the service by the person in charge.

All information required on staff files to be in line with the current requirements.

2 (d)

Staffs most recent curriculum vitae was on the staff files at the time of inspection but were misfiled.

All staff members have renewed their garda vetting and documentary evidence of this has been placed in their respective files.

All staff files have been organised and information is clear to be seen. All new members of staff will have to complete a staff file form fully with start dates and employment history recorded clearly.

Supporting documentation submitted

2 (a) References were validated and submitted on the 20.09.2023. Copy of a new validation of reference checklist submitted on 17.11.2023.

2 (d) All information required for these staff members was submitted on the 20.09.23.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 9 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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 registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. When the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service there were 6 staff members working directly with 33 children. The service manager was available to provide relief for staff or assist in the rooms as required.

(2) The registered provider ensured that on the day of inspection, the adult to child ratio was always maintained at the minimum specified ratios.

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) The children's well-being, learning and development was facilitated on the day for the age and stage of development.

- Children were supported to be independent. On the morning of inspection Children had free movement around their care rooms. Choosing their own activities with support from the staff available if they required it. Activities where age and developmentally appropriate.
- Children were observed to have an opportunity to access the front outdoor area. At 12:15pm both the Senior and the Junior room came together giving the chance for all children to mix and play with their peers outside. The Baby room children had access at the same time to a separate aged appropriate area to the rear of the premises.
- There was a range of equipment in two other outdoor areas to support play. This included slides, climbing areas, and a sensory area. The use of these areas was not observed on the day.

(1) (b) The inspectors observed appropriate care practices during the inspection.

- During nappy changes staff members spoke and interacted positively with the children.
- Children's nappies were changed both on a regular basis and as required.
- Children of toileting age were encourage to go independently and did not have to wait to be brought.
- Noses were wiped when required.
- Children were observed to be listened to, cuddled, and comforted throughout the service on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

- 1 (a) The registered provider did not ensure that children's well-being was facilitated on the day of inspection.
- Clean and safe drinking water was not readily available and accessible to children throughout the day in all rooms.
- 1 (b) The registered provider did not ensure that suitable care practices were in place on the day of inspection.
- Upon waking, children in the baby room, were not allowed enough time to support them in the transition from sleeping to outdoor play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1 (a) We have adapted our approaches within the baby room. Children will have accessibility to clean drinking water in the room throughout the day. All staff are aware of this current practice update.

Our healthy eating policy is being reviewed at the moment and staff will have refresher training when the new updates are completed.

There will be regular monitoring and reviewing of the current practices in place by the person in charge. Our healthy eating policy will be reviewed regularly.

1 (b) Children will have time to go to a quiet area in the room and be supported, given time to transition to their play. Our sleep policy will be updated and staff will have refresher training with new policy updates.

There will be regular reviewing of our current practices to ensure we are providing the child with the most comfortable environment.

Supporting documentation submitted

1 (a) Copy of the service's updated Healthy eating and nutrition policy submitted on the 17.11.2023.

1 (b) Copy of service's updated Safe rest/sleep policy submitted on the 17.11.2023.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 19 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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 registered provider ensured the following,

- On arrival the main entrance door to the service was found to be locked, preventing unauthorised entry or unsupervised exit from the service. A buzzer system was in place to gain entry to the service. The front entrance remained locked after children had arrived. Staff members were observed to remain at the exit doors during collection times.
- Play equipment and play materials observed on the day of inspections were in adequate condition throughout the service.
- The hot water provided at the children's wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature below 43°C for hand washing.

Infection Control:

The registered provider ensured the following,

- The service was visually clean on the day of inspection. Staff were observed cleaning periodically throughout the day.
- A cleaning schedule was observed to be in use with separate daily schedule for the sterilisation of mouthed days.
- The nappy changing unit was observed to be cleaned effectively between each child, and children's hands washed after they were changed in line with best practice guidance.
- In the Senior and Junior rooms, children's hands were observed to be washed after coming in from the outdoor area and prior to eating.

Safe Sleep:

The registered provider ensured the following,

- The sleep room temperature was recorded at 19.4°C which is within the accepted levels of 16-20°C for a sleep room.
- Stackable beds were available for children over 2 years of age who required sleep.
- All linen provided was cleaned and individual to each child.

Fire Safety:

The registered provider ensured the following,

- All fire exits were observed to be free from obstruction.
- Records of attendance were observed to be kept which documented the time of arrival and departure of each child.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The registered provider did not ensure that reasonable measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child.

- The nappy waste disposal bins were not in line with a regulatory guidance. The nappy disposal bins within the service were hand operated, posing a risk of cross infection to the user. A child was observed to use the handle on one of the nappy disposal bins to dispose of a paper towel after they had washed their hands.
- The Foot pedalled bins were not operational. The foot pedal bins in the baby room were observed not to be working effectively. Children and staff were observed to lift the lid with their hands to dispose of waste. This posed a risk of infection.
- The nappy changing procedure was not in line with best practice. A change of apron was not observed between each child's nappy change and a fresh pair of gloves was not observed to be applied after wet or soiled nappy had been removed from each child. These posed a risk of cross infection.
- Food hygiene measures were not met. It was observed on the day that afternoon snack was brought from the kitchen to the main care room for serving via the sanitary area. This could lead to cross contamination.

Safe Sleep:

The registered provider did not ensure that safe sleep guidance was followed,

- Children under 2 sleeping with toys in their cot is contrary to the Safe Sleep guidance for this age group. A sleeping child was observed sleeping with a teddy close to their face. Upon observing this, the inspector asked for this to be removed. Later in the day, the second inspector onsite observed a second child sleeping in a cot with the same teddy bear.

- Best practice for sleeping children under 2 requires recording of a child's breathing, colour, and position. Inspectors observed the sleep checks were not occurring within ten-minute intervals. Checks consisted of staff looking through the glass panel in the door or looking inside the door. This was not deemed as sufficient physical observation of the child as breathing or colour of the child could not be determined from a distance.

Fire Safety:

The registered provider did not ensure that regular fire drills were carried out.

On the day of inspection, the inspectors were advised that each room had their own record of fire drills. The records were posted on the door and walls of their respective rooms. The drills were not carried out monthly or on a regular basis in line with best practice. The last two fire drills recorded for each room was as follows.

- The Junior room – May 2023, September 2023.
- The Senior room – May 2023, January 2023.
- The Baby room – November 2022, May; year unrecorded.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- A foot-operated, lined, lidded bin that is leak proof, sealable and easy to clean has been purchased for nappy waste disposal. Regular reviewing and reflection on procedures and practices regarding the nappy waste disposal will be ongoing to ensure to keep up to date with current regulations.
- The Foot pedalled bin is replaced in this room. Health and safety checks will be carried out daily within the rooms to ensure that incidents are not missed and to also reduce the risk of infection spreading. If materials need replacing or repairing the room leader will notify the manager.
- All staff have reflected on the nappy changing procedures to be in line with best practice. Training is available to all staff. Our nappy changing policy is being reviewed at present and all staff will undergo refresher training when the policy has been updated. Evaluation and regular review of our current practices will take place.
- We received a visit from the environmental health team on the 2.10.23. He carried out an inspection on what practices and procedures we were carrying out whilst serving food. He felt that our practices would not be a concern to lead to cross contamination as the food was covered whilst being transported through this area.

We have since reviewed and reflected on our current practice and have changed our current route to how we bring food into the main care room. We have been in consultation with the environmental health team to ensure that we are in line with all food hygiene regulations. All staff are aware of these current changes to practice and our policy is being reviewed and updated to meet these practices. All staff dealing with food have completed HACCP Training.

Safe Sleep:

- All staff have had refresher training on the current guidelines and requirements for safe sleep practices for all children. All staff are aware of the importance of following the required safe sleep practices. The service will inform the parents of the importance of safe sleep, and our practices to ensure safe sleep within the service. The safe sleep policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure that our policy is following best practices regarding safe sleep. All staff will avail of training during induction and training will be available to all staff within the service.
- All staff working with children under 2 have reviewed the safe sleep policy currently in place in the service and refreshed their training through this policy, acknowledging the importance of monitoring and recording of sleep checks for the safety of all children in our care. Continuous monitoring that these practices are been carried out daily and regular checks of sleep times and sleep checks recorded correctly will be carried out by the person in charge. Our sleep policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure it is in line with current safe sleep regulations.

Fire Safety:

- A staff meeting was held to reflect and review our current practices and procedures in relation to fire safety within the service. All staff reviewed our current fire safety policy and importance of carrying out and recording these fire drills on a monthly basis in each room. A new template for recording fire drills has been implemented and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Our current policy is under review, and staff will undergo refresher training when the policy is updated. Fire drills will be carried out each month within each room, each staff member will be clear of the procedure and assembly point clearly marked out. The person in charge will assign a staff member to ensure that this practice is being carried out in line with current regulation and supports best practice within the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of new foot pedalled bin submitted.

Safe Sleep:

Copy of service's updated Safe rest/sleep policy submitted on the 17.11.2023.

Fire Safety:

Evidence new fire drill template, the last two fire drills, and Fire Safety Awareness training certificate for staff member submitted on 17.11.2023.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been addressed. 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) The registered provider ensured there was a person trained in first aid for children at all times available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider ensured there was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises available to the children attending the service.

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 firefighting 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) The registered provider ensured that,
- (a) there was a record of any fire drill took place in the premises and
 - (b) there was a record to show that the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms available in the premises. The last recorded date of maintenance was the 5th of October 2022.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) The registered provider, in line with the services documentation, did not ensure that the fire procedures were reviewed when stated. Procedures displayed stated they were to be reviewed in February 2020. This could cause potential harm and or delay in the event of having to enact the procedure.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire policy and procedures are under review and will be updated. To ensure safety for all children, staff and other service users, a regular review and reflection on current policies and practices will be completed by the person in charge. Ensuring all are familiar with the evacuation procedure.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence new fire drill template, the last two fire drills, and Fire Safety Awareness training certificate for staff member submitted on 17.11.2023.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 26 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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 had a certificate of insurance valid until the 27th March 2024 showing that adequate insurance cover was in place for the service's maximum number of 51 children.