

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL062
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Name of Service:	Letterkenny Community P/G Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	County Enterprise Business Park, Ballyraine, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 PF29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eoin Gildea
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	04/07/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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

Letterkenny Community Playgroup Childcare Ltd. is a not-for-profit pre-school service based in Letterkenny town. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional pre-school care to children aged 0 to 6 years and operates between 7.45am and 5.45pm each weekday. The service is also registered to provide school age care.

The premises consists of a purpose-built standalone two-story building situated within an enterprise park on the outskirts of the town with ample nearby parking to facilitate drop-off and collection. There are six pre-school rooms, two of which are operated from single units in a separate two-story premises within the same site. Children from all rooms have access to the designated outdoor play areas surrounding the main building. Storage rooms, an office, a staff room, staff toilets and a kitchen are also available within the main building. Meals and snacks for children attending the service are prepared daily in the service by on-site kitchen staff.

Staffing

There were 19 adults present in the service on the day of inspection, 16 of whom were working directly with the children. There are three adults employed in the service as part of an employment activation programme. The registered provider is not on the premises on a daily basis, there is a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 23, 25, 26 and 29.

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

(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

(2) The person in charge confirmed that there were four adults newly employed in the service since the last regulatory inspection. In respect of the above-listed elements of Regulation 9(2) and (4) the recruitment records in relation to these four adults were examined as part of this inspection.

(a) Two references from past employers, in particular the most recent past employer were on file for two adults.

(b) One reference from a source other than a past employer was available for two adults both of whom had no previous employments or limited past employment.

(c) A review of staff files confirmed that Garda vetting had been obtained for each of the four adults.

(d) International police vetting from the relevant state was available for three of the adults working in the service for whom information presented at inspection indicated that they had resided in another state for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to indicate that one of the adults who worked directly with pre-school children attending the setting had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications framework. This requirement was non applicable for the three other adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

- There were no references on file for one adult.
- The second reference on file for a third adult was from a source other than a past employer despite the employment record indicating past employment.
- There was no record of validation on five of the references.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b)

- The adult who had not furnished references has left the service. Going forward we will ensure that community employment workers have the correct documentation prior to commencing at the service.
- A reference was obtained from the most recent past employer.
- References are validated by phone. The service will ensure validation occurs prior to commencing employment and is written and dated.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of a past employer reference was submitted.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been accepted and regulatory compliance has been achieved.

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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at the time of the inspectors arrival to the service and for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) On the morning of the inspection there were 14 adults working directly with 34 pre-school children in 4 rooms. In the afternoon there were seven adults working with 29 preschool children.
- By way of example, the following illustrates the adult child ratio that was observed on the morning of inspection.
- In the butterfly room (baby/toddler) there were four adults caring for eight children. Six of the children were aged 1-2 years and two children were aged 2-3 years.
 - In the ladybugs room there were nine children being cared for by three adults. There were six children aged 2-3 years and three children aged 3-4 years.
 - In the giraffe room, 13 children were being cared for by 3 adults. All children were aged 3-5 years.
 - In the rainbow room, there were four preschool children present with two adults. All children were aged 3-4 years. There was also 14 school age children present in the room.
 - An additional room, the busy bee's, provided school age care exclusively.

In addition to this, there was one additional adult in the giraffe room and one additional adult in the rainbow room who were employed in the service as part of a workplace activation programme.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

A record was maintained in the service of the required information as detailed in points (b) to (k) of the Regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

- (a) There was no record of employment or experience on file for one staff member employed in the service on an employment support programme.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (a) The person has left the service, in future the service will ensure community employment staff have the correct documentation prior to taking up their position.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the service is accepted as meeting the requirements of the regulation.

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 doors leading into the service were secured so as to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- Internal doors were secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas and store cupboards containing hazardous objects and materials were secured and out of children's reach. Cleaning products used in the service were securely stored so as to be inaccessible to the pre-school children. The kitchen was inaccessible to children at all times.
- The grounds of the service and all outdoor play areas were secured with boundary fencing preventing children from exiting unsupervised.
- The staircase was adequately lit with a suitable handrail provided and the floor was in good condition and on-slip.
- Electrical cables were secured to prevent the risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities were in a clean and hygienic condition. Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary accommodation were available. Staff members were observed cleaning play areas and frequently touched surfaces after children's use.

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available in the rooms and in the children's sanitary accommodation to support hand washing practices. Children were observed washing their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, and before snack.
- Staff members in the butterfly room confirmed that children's soothers were stored individually and sterilised after use.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available for use in the rooms and in the sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. A supply of single use plastic aprons and gloves was available in the nappy changing areas for staff use.

Administration of Medication:

- A record of medication administered to children was maintained in each room with signed parental consent.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed to sleep both in the designated sleep room off the butterfly room and on floor beds in the ladybugs room. Children aged under two years were placed to sleep in a standard cot with cellular blankets. The cots and floor beds were adequately spaced. Staff were observed to either be physically present with the sleeping children or entering the room at no more than 10-minute intervals. The temperature of the rooms where children were sleeping was measured on inspection and noted to be maintained within the appropriate range of 16-20°C.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were free from obstruction and there was a documented record of fire drills having taken place monthly.

Outing:

- Staff informed the inspector that outings take place occasionally. There was a policy on outings in the service and evidence of prior consent given by parents. Documentation reviewed by the inspector indicated that a risk assessment is carried out prior to outings taking place and this was confirmed by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The plastic underlay in the outdoor play area which contained wood chip/bark was exposed in a number of areas causing a trip hazard for children.
2. The plastic trunking containing electoral sockets in the giraffe room was broken with a risk of children accessing the electoral wires within.
3. There was no restrictor on the windows in the giraffe room and one of the windows in the ladybugs room posing a risk of injury.

Administration of Medication:

4. Records of prescription medication administered to children were not signed by the parents on collection which poses a risk that a parent may unintentionally administer additional doses of medication outside of the maximum safe limits.

Safe Sleep:

5. The records of 10-minute sleep checks in the butterfly room did not record the colour, breathing pattern, position of the children or the temperature of the room on each check. The records detailed this information once and, on each check after that, only the time was recorded. The information as detailed above is required to be documented on each check carried out.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Mats have been ordered to cover the area and prevent trip hazard.
2. The trunking has been fixed.
3. The closures have been secured on the windows.

Administration of Medication:

4. The medicine records have been amended to include a parent signature.

Safe Sleep:

6. The sleep records have been amended to include the required information on each check.

Supporting documentation submitted

A purchase invoice for mats, sample medication records, photographs and a sample sleep check record were submitted.

Summary Comment

The information and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed and is deemed to adequately address the non-compliances identified on inspection.

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 was at least one person with up-to-date training in first aid for children rostered to be on the premises and working with the children at all times during the hours of operation.

(2) (a) (b) There were a number of first aid boxes in the service located in the preschool rooms and in communal areas. The accumulation of contents in the boxes assessed was adequate for the number of children in attendance.

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) There was a written record of fire drills that have taken place with the most recent dated in June 2023.
- (b) Records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment was last serviced in July 2022 and the smoke alarms in May 2023.
- (4) A notice of the of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire was on display in the preschool rooms and main hallway.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (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

- (a) The exterior of the building had been repaired in recent months therefore there were no obvious defects or visible signs of deterioration.
- (b) The premises was adequately secure to prevent unauthorised access or the unsupervised exit of a preschool child. The entrance to the service was gated with a buzzer system on the main door to alert staff of parents or visitors' arrival. The boundary of the premises and outdoor play area was secured with boundary fencing and block walls.
- (c) Each of the preschool rooms were lit by natural light leading from glass panelled windows. This was supplemented by overhead florescent lighting covered with shatter proof protective covers. The air temperature within each of the preschool rooms was maintained within the required range of 18-22°C. Ventilation was provided by way of openable windows in the preschool rooms and mechanical ventilation in the sanitary accommodation. There was no evidence of mould or malodours in the building to suggest an issue with ventilation.
- (d) The premises was maintained in a good state of repair and observed to be adequately cleaned.
- (e) There were adequate sanitary facilities which included toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas for the number of children in attendance. There was also provision for staff sanitary accommodation.