

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL118			
Name of Service:	Raphoe Community Playgroup Co. Ltd			
Address of Service:	Castle Road, Raphoe, Co. Donegal			
Eircode:	F93 DY84			
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Bradley			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	13/11/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	11
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			
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

Raphoe community playgroup is a community based not for profit service located in Raphoe, Co. Donegal. The service is registered to provide a morning preschool service for children aged 2-6 years from 09:15 to 12:15 and an afternoon preschool session from 13:30-16:30 each weekday. The service operates from a standalone portacabin which consists of one playroom and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor play area is available directly outside the playroom with access to a second large, enclosed playground.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. A total of six adults are employed in the service and work directly with the children. Three adults work with the children in the morning, two of these adults work with the children in the afternoon with a further three adults providing relief cover on different days to ensure three adults are always present with the children. One of these adults is employed 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 and 26. 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 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.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (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 morning and afternoon of the inspection, five adults in total were present. In the morning, three adults who worked directly with the children and the assistant manager who attended to assist the inspection. In the afternoon three adults, worked directly with the children.

On the most recent inspection dated the 22 March 2022, two staff files were reviewed and satisfactory. It was advised by the person in charge that four new staff had commenced in the service since the inspection conducted on 22 March 2022. In addition, Garda vetting for two staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

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

- (a) Five written validated references from past employers for three of the adults.
- (b) One written validated reference from reputable sources for one of the adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4) Four 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b)
- Two of the required references were not on file in respect of one of the adults.
- (d)
- Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (3)
- The above procedures were not carried out before the adults commenced working with the children in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Two references were obtained for one adult.
- Police vetting has been applied for.
- Vetting procedures will be carried out before any new staff member starts in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence submitted.
- No evidence submitted.
- No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider in respect of regulation (9)(2)(a) has been accepted. Evidence of an application for one adult for Garda Police Vetting was not submitted to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to Regulation (9)(2)(d) remains outstanding.

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 three adults cared for 11 children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 3 years and 9 months.
- In the afternoon session, three adults cared for 11 children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 4 years and 6 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 has a healthy eating policy in place and provides all snacks for the children attending the service. In the morning, a hot snack of pasta and sauce was provided for the children. In addition, crackers, rice cakes, carrots and a wide variety of fruit such as plum, melon, apple, orange and banana were available to the children. Staff encouraged and praised the children for trying new foods.
- In the afternoon sessions snack was bread, crackers, rice cakes, vegetables and fruits.
- Snack time was not rushed, and children had enough time to eat their food, with other children moving freely to another activity when they were finished.
- After snack time, staff ensured the children's faces and hands were cleaned, giving assistance to children who required it.
- Drinks which the children bring from home are available to them throughout the sessions.
- The service has a key worker system in place with each staff member assigned responsibility for a group of children.
- Children were supported to use the toilet independently with assistance given to those who required it.
- Children with additional needs were welcome and supported in the service, with staff members using a variety of strategies and resources to ensure their learning and development in the service.
- On the day of the inspection the weather was cold, staff ensured that the children had outdoor coats, wellingtons and hats for going outside.

Supporting relationships

- Staff were observed speaking kindly to the children throughout the sessions and intervened gently when minor disagreements occurred between the children.
- Staff communicated with each other throughout the morning and afternoon sessions in relation to the children's needs and activities.
- Communication with parents took place verbally at pick up and drop off times and a software application is used to send parents pictures and updates in relation to their child's day and development. Outside the

door of the service, a parent's noticeboard is available for displaying general information about the service.

- The children appeared happy and at ease with the routine of the day with each child engaged in activities in small groups or at times, independently.
- Transitions in the service were well managed by the staff, with children given notice both verbally and with the use of visuals of any upcoming change to routine such as snack time, going outdoors and home time.

Physical and Material environment

The preschool room is currently operating from a portacabin. The room is laid out with different areas to cater for a preschool child's development. Sensory trays with sand and water were available during the sessions, prewriting materials and items for junk art were available to the children, jigsaws and puzzles for fine motor development, dress up clothing and a home corner were available for imaginative play. Age-appropriate books were available for pre reading skills and a floor mat and cushions were available should a child require a rest. The outdoor area was well developed with a large range of items to support children's energetic play and curiosity in the outdoors. The children played on climbing frames with slides, wooden balance beams, large tractor tyres secured vertically in the ground and a large wooden boat. A water wall, mud kitchens, a natural teepee and wooden tunnels were available to the children outdoors. The inspector observed the children playing enthusiastically by having wheelbarrow races with each other in the outdoor area.

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 gate to the service was secure on the inspector's arrival, preventing unauthorised access to the service by an adult or a child leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of children's reach.
- The equipment in the care rooms was in good condition with toys stored in an orderly fashion in boxes.
- Blind cords were secured to the wall.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

- Ventilation in the main playroom and sanitary accommodation was by means of openable windows.
- The temperature of the service on the day of inspection was 19°C which is within the required range.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning records were in place which stated the areas to be cleaned each day.
- Staff supervised children's handwashing to ensure effective cleaning.
- Tables were wiped down after activities prior to snack time.
- Disposable hand towels, warm water and liquid soap were available to the children for handwashing.
- Pedal operated waste bins were available for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day of the inspection no medicine was administered. Records of previously administered medication were available for review by the inspector. On discussion, the staff demonstrated their knowledge and awareness of the safe administration of medication.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure 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'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda vetting was obtained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentary 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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in First Aid was available to the children. Four staff members in the service are trained First Aid Responders.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box was appropriately stocked for the number of children attending the preschool and was stored in an accessible location in the preschool.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was no available record to demonstrate that fire drills had taken place in the service.

(1)(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment. Records showed the firefighting equipment was last serviced in March 2025. However, the most recent service date of the smoke alarm was 17 May 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Fire drills are now documented.
2. Firefighting equipment has been serviced.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted

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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.