

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL004		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	ABC Playgroup		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	21 Glenellen Crescent, Swords, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 W6HO		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Valerie Byrne		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	15/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully		
<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

ABC Playgroup is a sessional preschool service registered to accommodate up to 16 children aged 2 – 6 years. The service is located within a private dwelling in a suburban area of Co. Dublin. An assigned side entrance leads to the area of the property designated for use as the sessional preschool consisting of one care room, two toilets and an outdoor play area. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) offering free preschool to eligible children. The service is open 38 weeks of year, Monday to Friday, 9.15am to 12.15pm.

### Staffing

On the day of inspection, there were 2 members of staff present working directly with the children. The registered provider was present and also works directly with the children on a daily basis. One member of staff 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child.

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)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

A total of 3 staff files were reviewed including the file for the registered provider. All 3 adults whose files were reviewed work directly with the early years children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) Two written and validated references were available for the 2 staff members and the registered provider whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 2 staff members and the registered provider who work directly with the children attending the service.

(d) On review of the information available in the staff files there was no requirement for international police vetting for any current members of staff or the registered provider.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 2 staff members and the registered provider who work directly with the children held appropriate childcare qualifications at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### 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 staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.45am and remained so throughout the inspection. The following was observed:
- There were 15 children present aged 3 years 3 months to 5 years 1 month being cared for by 3 adults.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
  - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
  - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
  - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
  - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
  - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
  - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

*(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*

*(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-  
(c) an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) A total of 11 child records were sampled for review. All 11 records reviewed contained the required information as specified in Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i).

(3)(c) The records were open to inspection on the premises by the inspector, who is authorised to do so.

## 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*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Morning snack was provided by the parents of the children attending the preschool session. The snacks provided were in line with the services Healthy Eating policy which requested parents to provide nutritional snacks and avoid foods that were high in sugar content. Snack time was observed to be relaxed and social with the staff assigning roles to children to help prepare such as handing out plates and water bottles. The children's water bottles were easily accessible and available to the children throughout the session.
- Children used the toilets independently with discreet supervision provided when needed. Children who required extra support for toileting were provided with care promptly. The staff were attentive to the children's personal care needs, assisting them to wipe their noses or faces and to dress for outdoor play.

- The staff members were observed using a responsive and consistent approach to supporting behaviour management with the children. Children were approached calmly, and staff used gentle tones of voice to remind children of good social behaviour or support them in resolving issues that arose between peers. It was also observed that staff were knowledgeable about the children's needs and were able to pre-empt activities or moments in the daily routine that some children would require extra support with.
- Transitions were supported with care and attention. The children were provided with regular updates and reminders as to when one activity would come to an end, and what was happening next.
- The staff implemented a variety of practices to support communication with all children, including visual routines, visual signposting about good social behaviours, and displays about feelings and emotions. A staff member was also observed regularly using Lámh signs to support interactions with children.
- The children had access to an outdoor space and time was allocated for outdoor play. Children's personal choice was respected, and children who wanted to go back to the care room were supported to do so.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff were observed interacting with all children in a warm, nurturing and personal manner. They spoke about the children positively and shared stories of children's accomplishments and development during their time in the preschool. Children's efforts were praised throughout the session and they were supported to work and play together with sensitive input from the staff. This practice supports children's well-being.
- The children were familiar with the staff and it was evident that they felt safe and secure in the environment as they confidently navigated the space to play, they looked to the adults often for ideas and asked the adults to join in their play. The children spoke about activities that happened before with fondness and activities planned for the week ahead with excitement.
- The children's photographs and work were displayed in the care room, reflecting the children's identity, and encouraging children's sense of belonging in the preschool.
- There was evidence of effective partnership with parents. Children who required additional support had individual care plans that were created with parents. Children's development and learning was captured in individual journals to share with parents. A text messaging system was in place to keep parents regularly updated about upcoming events or courses such as Pyjama Day, school open days etc. Staff also spoke with parents daily at drop off and collection about the child's preschool day.

### Physical and material environment:

- There was a variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment available to the children. The care room had designated areas of interest such as the home corner, library area, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, small world, and construction.
- There were sensory materials available to the children on the day of inspection including modelling clay and sand.
- The furniture in the care room was suitable, with low tables, chairs and storage units allowing the children to navigate their learning environment with ease.
- The outdoor area was part paved and part natural grass. The children had access to slides, see-saws., ride along toys, bikes, and scooters. There was ample space for the children to run and play.

### 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 front door to the preschool service was appropriately secured when the inspector arrived unannounced to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and preventing an unauthorised person from gaining access to the care room.
- A door in the care room leading to the kitchen was appropriately secured at all times.
- Cleaning agents were stored appropriately and out of children's reach.

##### Infection Control:

- Perishable food items brought to the service by the children were stored in the fridge in individually labelled zip-lock bags.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- Children were observed washing their hands before their morning snack. Staff were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times, for example, before handling food and after wiping a child's nose.

##### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection. However, there was evidence of good practice and procedures in relation to medication administration following a review of recent medication administration consent forms and the medication policy.

### Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were clearly identifiable with appropriate signage and were kept clear to allow for a quick exit from the premises if required.
- There was a person on the premises who had undertaken fire safety training in 2021.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- There was an increased risk of an unauthorised person gaining access to the premises as the wooden door to the side of the residential premises, which is signposted as the entrance to the service, was open on the inspector's arrival at 9.45am. Upon entering through this wooden side door the garden was easily accessible as the low gate was also unlocked. The care room of the service leads directly to the garden, although it is acknowledged the door to the care room from the garden was locked. The wooden side door was closed by a member of staff when the children entered the garden for outdoor playtime at 11.30 am.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The registered provider stated that, to ensure safety at all times, staff now close the wooden side entrance door immediately after morning drop off. Parents and guardians who arrive late have been informed to call the preschool mobile number and a staff member will come to the door.

#### Preventive actions:

This will be checked daily by the registered provider.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed and accepted the response from the registered provider. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

## 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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)&(b) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations in the care room.

### 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-
- (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) Records were available to show that previous fire drills that took place on the premises were recorded. The most recent fire drill took place on 25/10/2023.
- (b) There was a record available that detailed the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. Firefighting equipment was last checked by a registered professional on 20/09/2023. The smoke alarm system was last serviced by a registered professional in May 2023.
- (2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person, the early years inspector.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the care room.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

### Compliance Information

Evidence was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate 22 sessional preschool children, with an expiry date of 27/03/2024.