

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY226
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Name of Service:	Seoda Beaga Teo (Little Gems Playgroup)
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Address of Service:	Old National School, Recess, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 AE65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Geraldine Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

This sessional preschool service is in an old national school building in the rural village of Recess, county Galway. This pre-school consists of one playroom, reception area and sanitary accommodation. Various community groups have access to other rooms on the premises. The preschool service caters for children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 6 years of age. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional care programme is offered from 09.45 to 12.45, Monday to Friday. A child led play-based curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided. A quiet rest area is available in the playroom for children to rest and relax if they choose to or to opt out of an activity. The pre-school children have access to a secure outdoor play area to the front of the building for play activities and exercise.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not in the service daily. There are 2 adults working directly with the children - the designated person in charge and a designated deputy working in the premises on a daily basis. The 2 adults working directly with and caring for the children in the service hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-6 on the National Qualifications Framework. The adult staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education.

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.

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 two *people in charge* 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 manager was the designated person in charge and the assistant manager was available to deputise as required.
- (b) Both the designated person in charge and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.
- Two staff files were available for the staff working directly with the children during the service’s hours of operation. The findings included the following:
- (2)(a)(b) Four of 4 validated references on file were from past employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the 2 staff members.
 - (d) International police vetting was not required, as no member of staff had lived in another state for a period longer than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) The staff working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) The pre-school attendance records were reviewed for the previous 3 weeks indicating an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct and maintained on the day of inspection.
There was 2 staff members working directly with and caring for 4 preschool children.

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*

Compliance Information

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school. This information was provided at collection times, via text messages and by phone calls.
- The children's learning and key observations were discussed with parents and guardians and records were maintained.

- Individual learning journals were used to capture the profile of each child attending the pre-school. Each child's areas of interest, strategies and learning goals were captured by the staff showing various themes engaged in, photographs of the child and their art and craft activities.
- The children were cared for by the staff in a kind and gentle manner. The staff were observed speaking to the children at their level, listening attentively and responding in a quiet, calm and sensitive manner. The staff provided positive praise and reassurance to the children when necessary 'super job' 'well done' you are 'so good at sharing'.
- The children were observed at free play, threading activities, linking toys, making puzzles and climbing on the activity centre in the main playroom.
- In the outdoor area, the children engaged in running, chasing games, jumping, climbing on the activity centre and sliding down the slide.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The playroom was large bright and spacious; the area was clean and colourful.
- Play equipment and materials were freely accessible and available to the children on low shelves.
- There was a selection of child sized seating and low tables for tabletop activities.
- There was child size soft seating in the form of couches, cushions and matting in the playroom where a child could rest and relax if they choose to.

Items in the Playroom included.

- Low level shelving with boxes of shapes, threading material, links, connectors, blocks, counters, puzzles, timers, crayons, paper, markers, art and crafts, paints, animals and figurines were accessible to the preschool children.
- A home corner, with food items, utensils and crockery, dolls, cots, transport vehicles including cars, trucks, farmyards, libraries, imaginative area with a computer and phone, radio and music, dolls houses and dress up areas.
- Displayed on the walls were educational posters and artwork, topics of interest, themes and visual aids.

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:

- There was a secure entry system into the main entrance front door of the school and the preschool door was secure.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised.
- The fire doors in the playroom were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the pre-school.
- The playroom temperature was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition for the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined and pedal operated bins.
- The nappy changing area was clean; aprons and gloves were available for use when changing a child's nappy. There was a bin available for safe disposal of waste.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.

Safe Sleep:

- A rest and quiet area was provided in the playroom beside the library to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose.

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 service provided evidence that 2 adults trained in first aid responder FAR were available for the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playroom.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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)(a) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last fire drill was dated 1st of May 2025.

(b) A record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment with the last service dated November 2025.

A record was maintained of the smoke and fire detection system in the premises with the last annual service dated 21st of May 2025.

- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service on the notice board in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance cover was available for 20 pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2026.