

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY226				
Name of Service:	Seoda Beaga Teo (Little Gems Playgroup)				
Address of Service:	Old National School, Recess, Co. Galway				
Eircode:	H91 AE65				
Name of Registered Provider:	Geraldine Kelly				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	14/09/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>6</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	6	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway, Co. 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

The service caters for preschool children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional care programmes from 9.45 hrs to 12.45 hrs, Monday to Friday is offered. A child led play-based curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided. This sessional service is in an old national school in the rural village of Recess, Co. Galway. This pre-school consists of 1 playroom, reception / lobby area and sanitary accommodation. Various community groups have access to other rooms in the premises. A quiet rest area is available in the playroom for children to rest and relax if they choose 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, exploration, and learning.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not in the service on a daily basis. There were two adults - the designated person in charge and a designated deputy working in the premises on a daily basis. The two 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 on the National Qualifications Framework. The adults 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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15, 19, 23, 25, 26, and 28. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15- Record of a Pre School-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 person in charge additional adult 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)

There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times when the pre-school children were present.

(2)(a)&(b)

Four written validated references, on file for the two staff members were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of the two staff members.

(d)

Not applicable, as the two staff members had not lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years and thereby did not require police vetting.

(4) The two adults working directly and caring for the children had 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.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) The attendance records for the past two weeks were reviewed by the early years' inspector, indicating that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the pre-school children.
- (3) The staff/child ratio was correct and maintained on the day of inspection.
There were two staff working directly with and caring for six children.
All the children were aged between 2 years and 5 years of age.
- (8)(c)
The service is not operated single-handedly, as there was a designated person in charge and an additional staff working in the pre-school service.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i)

A sample of ten children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspector.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The ten random children's records contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

Basic Needs

(1)(a) & (b)

- The snacks supplied by the parents were healthy and nutritious and consisted of sandwiches, crackers, cheese, fresh fruit pieces, yogurts with water for the children when needed. Perishable items were stored in the service fridge.
- Crockery and plates were offered during children's snack times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children in the playroom.
- Children attending the service who were toilet trained, toileted independently or with some assistance or support by adults as required.
- One child wore a training nappy and had their nappy changed as required. The adults were found to be caring in their interactions at nappy changing, whilst maintaining the child's dignity and privacy at all times.
- The children's self-care was assisted and encouraged by adults for e.g., to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue in the playroom.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches in a designated cosy area.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children played predominantly outside and had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, playing house / kitchen, at imaginative play wearing costumes, looking at books and climbing the activity centre.
- The children showed the inspector the puzzles they were making, the beading boards and the children were also observed stacking, drawing, at construction, shape sorting and connecting. In the outdoor area the children were observed climbing the large wooden activity centre, balancing on the rope steps, chasing, running, and playing catch.

Supporting Relationships

- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.
- The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child's choices, age and stage of development. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

Physical Material Environment

- The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children.
- Low level shelving was available to store and display all equipment. Topics of interest were at the child's eye level such as the children own art work. The staff used labels and pictures to help children identify materials.
- Play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore were freely available in the room. Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by the children. The children's artwork, family photos, learning charts and visual displays were at a low level for the children to see.
- The children had daily access to the outdoor spaces for outdoor play. It was a safe and secure environment with a large activity centre, slide, see saw, rocker and a spinner.

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 door into the sessional service was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- All storage cupboards were secured, and cleaning agents stored out of reach of the children.
- The materials and equipment throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, fencing and a gate.
- Leads and cables were securely fastened and thereby inaccessible to a child.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- There was shatter proof lighting on the ceilings in the corridors and playroom.

Infection Control:

- Foot pedalled lidded bins were available in the playroom and sanitary area.
- Tissues were available for the staff and children in the indoor and outdoor environment.
- The staff and children washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included: after messy play, outdoor play and after toileting and prior to mealtime.
- The nappy changing procedures were completed in an appropriate manner. The nappy changing mat was clean and intact.
- All toys and materials were easily cleaned and maintained in good condition.

Safe Sleep:

- Child size couches were available for children to rest, relax or opt out of an activity if they choose to.

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 a person trained in first aid was 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 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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment with the annual service dated November 2022.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 30th of March 2023.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the Premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date 27.03.2024 was for a sessional service for 22 children and included the following -

- public liability insurance.
- insurance against fire and theft.
- buildings insurance.
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (b)
- All areas, both indoors and outdoors, were free from glass, rubbish, sharp or hazardous items and were in a clean condition.
 - The physical layout of the service was arranged so that there was a high level of visibility in the inside and outside area.
 - Storage space for equipment was separate from the early years room floor space and was inaccessible to children.
 - Equipment was stored safely and in an organised and hygienic way.
- (d)
- Waste was stored in rigid lidded containers and were fenced off from the outdoor play area inaccessible to the preschool children.
- (e)
- There was two children's toilets and two wash hand basins in the sanitary area. Additionally, there was a wash hand basin in the playroom. A staff toilet was available on the premises.
 - The service has one designated nappy changing unit with a clean intact changing mat. Appropriate, storage is provided for all necessary nappy changing equipment.