

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY263
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Name of Service:	Traceys Early Years Playroom Limited
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Address of Service:	Cregmore, Claregalway, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 CPC2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tracey Hurney
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	08/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child & Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - 1st Floor, Merlin Park University Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
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 full day care service is in a rural area of county Galway between the villages of Claregalway and Lackagh. The service is registered to operate as a full day care, part-time and sessional service and caters for pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years and the opening hours are 8 am to 6 pm. The sessional service operates between 9 am and 12 pm. The service comprises of 3 playrooms which includes playroom 1 and playroom 2 in the main building and to the rear of the service is playroom 3. The service has its own kitchen where the main hot meal is prepared and snacks. The service also has an outdoor area to the rear of the service, which is partially covered for use in wet weather.

Staffing

A total of 6 adults employed in the service which includes 4 adults working directly with children, a relief staff member and the registered provider. The adults have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. The 6 adults who work directly with the children hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to a level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 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.

(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 and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The registered provider 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 on the premises during the operational hours of the service when the pre-school children were present.
- (2) All 6 staff files were reviewed:
- (a) Twelve of the required 12 written validated references, on file for the 6 adults were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
 - (b) None of the 12 required written validated references for the 6 adults were from a reputable source.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of 6 adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

- (d) One adult over the age of 18 years who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years, required international police vetting. This was available for inspection.
- (4) The 6 adults who were working directly with children, all held 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. Copies of qualifications were on file for the 6 staff.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 5 adults working directly with 34 children on the morning of the inspection and there were 5 adults working directly with 23 children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least two adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and children's cultural and dietary requirements were met.
- Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times. The main hot meal of the day was spaghetti bolognaise. Children's snacks were observed in the playrooms and consisted of fruit, yogurts, sandwiches, cheese and milk or water.
- The atmosphere at mealtimes was relaxed. Adults sat with children and engaged with them in conversation about Halloween and holidays.
- A water station was available in the playrooms for children to help themselves as required.
- Perishable items belonging to children were stored in the fridge belonging to children for snack times.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development in the playrooms.
- Children who were toilet trained toileted independently or supported by adults as required.
- Children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the inspection and they were supervised by adults.
- Children had the opportunity to partake in small and large group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork and a sense of belonging.
- Children played throughout the day in the clearly defined outdoor play area.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- A key worker system provided opportunities for the children to form and sustain secure relationships with the adults who were caring for them in the setting.
- Transitions were observed to be thought through, planned and coordinated well by the adults thus allowing children time to adjust from one activity to another.

- The adults demonstrated respect and warmth towards the children in their care using soft and gentle tones, positive language and engaging with the children at their level.
- Communication with parents was at drop off and collection, by email, phone or arranged meetings.
- Each child had the opportunity to move freely to the numerous play experiences available to them.
- The service had learning journals for each child attending the service.
- Positive reinforcement was very much part of the day with children being told by adults ‘well done, thanks for helping and keep the good work up’.
- Visual displays were on the wall and children’s artwork with the themes being linked to the Halloween theme in the service.
- The service was linked into the local childcare committee for professional support.

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 were 3 adults with a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and the staff roster indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available during the operation of the service.
- (2)(a) Suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the office with identifiable signage.
- (b) The first aid box was available to children in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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.
- (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) Written records of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service were available. The last date recorded was the 22 September 2025.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate and the smoke alarm certificate was dated May 2025.
- (2)(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were positioned on the walls of the playrooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had an in-date insurance certificate for 48 preschool children on a full day care basis valid until the 27 March 2026.