

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK005				
Name of Service:	Ballyragget Community Playgroup				
Address of Service:	Chapel Avenue, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny				
Eircode:	R95 X045				
Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Haughney				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	19/11/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>11</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	11	PM	N/A
AM	11	PM	N/A		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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	Click or tap here to enter text.
---------------------------------	----------------------------------

Description of service

Ballyragget Community Playgroup is a registered early childhood care and education (ECCE) childcare service which operates from the Ballyragget community hall in north county Kilkenny. The service operates from a designated classroom from 09:00 to 12:30 hours, Monday to Friday, from September through to June, in accordance with the ECCE scheme school year.

The service caters for children from 2 years and eight months to 6 years.

Staffing

There are five staff members employed in the service to work directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service. All staff members, who as part of their role in the service work directly with the children in attendance hold Level 5 to Level 6 qualifications in early childhood care and education, on the national Quality and Qualifications (QQI) Ireland 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used under regulations 10, 15 and 24. The scope of the inspection included the classroom and observation of the outdoor area.

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 designated 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*

(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 in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that the designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(2) Staff files for five staff members employed in the service were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the five staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting for one staff member employed in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months was available on file.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for each of the five staff members, who as part of their role in the service, were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On review of the service's policies and staff files, the inspector was assured that the registered provider and designated person in charge, ensured that all required documents specified in Schedule 5, were available in the service, was communicated to the staff as part of their induction process, on commencing employment in the service and revised with the staff annually.

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) There were always, during the inspection, an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children.

(3) There were 11 preschool children aged 3 to 5 years directly cared for by 3 staff members.

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) to (i) On review of a sample of 11 records of pre-school children registered to attend the service, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each preschool child.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

On observation of the physical environment of the service, the inspector was assured that there was adequate and appropriate furniture, play equipment, materials and resources provided for the children attending the service. The classroom provided a wide variety of interest areas including a well-developed kitchen/home area which was referred to as “Our Kitchen” and included play equipment such as a fridge, washing machine, microwave, wooden toy coffee machine, food mixer, child sized dining table and chairs.

A dish washer rack, kitchen utensils and open-ended play materials such as a teapot, colander, and lemon squeezer all enhanced the theme of the area. A shop area included a cash register, shopping trolley and open-ended recycled food boxes, jars and cartons. Additionally, an art and creativity area, rest and reading area, messy play area, construction/transport area and dolls house provided the children with a choice of environments to play in.

Low-level shelving provided the children with access to storage containers of manipulative and connective play resources as well as an adequate supply of age-appropriate Montessori equipment.

In the outdoor play area, both soft play and grass surfaces were resourced with play equipment which included an outdoor kitchen, tee-pee hut, wooden fire station, shop stall, basketball net, crawling caterpillar tunnel and messy play tables.

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 service main entrance door was secured with a call bell system and the internal door of the classroom secured internally with a high lock system. Staff could view any potential visitors to the service via the large clear windows of the service. This helped to ensure that no unauthorised person could gain access to the service or that a child could not exit the service unsupervised.

Infection Control:

The service had appropriate toilet and nappy changing facilities provided to meet the number and needs of the children attending the service. All sanitary facilities contained handwash basins, supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use. There was also a designated staff toilet and a nappy changing table if a child attended the service in nappies.

Children were observed to use the toilet and hand washing facilities with ease, while staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, after messy and before snack time.

Administration of Medication:

There was an adequate administration of medication policy in place in the service if a child required administration of an anti-febrile medication or if a child centred medication plan was required for the administration of a specific medication in the event of an emergency.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place, to implement when taking children on an outing away from the service. The policy detailed the preparation, risk assessment and communication with parents/guardians prior to the outing, the precautions, and procedures to be taken prior to and during the outing and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of attendance records the inspector was assured that the staff recorded the checking in and out of each child attending the service daily, detailing each child's time of entry and exit daily.

(3)(a) The staff assured the inspector that no other person apart from children attending the service, parents/guardians dropping or collecting children, staff members could enter the premises without being approved by a staff member.

(b) The inspector observed that a daily visitor record was maintained of any authorised visitors permitted entry to the service. The inspector was requested to record their entry to the service, which included the date, name, contact number, reason for entry, who approved the access and time of entry and departure.

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 five staff members employed in the service each held current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the roster demonstrated that an adequate number of staff members with FAR training were present.

(2)(a)(b) A first aid box was available and easily accessed by staff on a shelf in the service. A record demonstrated that its contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 11 November 2024.
- (b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check for firefighting equipment and for the smoke alarm system were recorded as having taken place on 13 February 2024.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that a fire procedure notice was clearly displayed in the entrance hall, for all authorised persons entering the building to see. A fire assembly point was clearly visible in the outdoor play area with direct access via a gate to the external car park.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the service displayed on a notice board in the main entrance hall and on a notice board in the service office.

The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a childcare service provision for a maximum of 22 early years children and covered the period from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.