

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK018
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Name of Service:	Conahy Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	Conahy Community Hall, Upper Conahy, Ballyragget, Conahy, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 PP62
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eimear Croke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
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Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton.
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Title:	Early Years Inspector.
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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

Conahy Community Playschool is a registered sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) service which operates from the community hall in the rural village of Conahy in north county Kilkenny. The service provides a sessional ECCE service to children aged 2 to 6 years of age between the hours of 09:00 to 12:30, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year as per the ECCE calendar.

Staffing

The community service is governed by a voluntary board of management who do not work in the service. There were three staff members employed in the service to work directly with the children in attendance. All three staff members held qualifications at Level 5 to Level 6 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 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 following regulations were assessed on this inspection:

- Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment,
- Regulation 10- Policies, Procedures etc.-of a preschool service,
- Regulation 11-Staffing Levels,
- Regulation 15- Record of a Preschool Child,
- Regulation 21-Equipment and Materials,
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of child,
- Regulation 25 - First Aid,
- Regulation 26 - Fire Safety Measures,
- Regulation 28 - Insurance.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the classroom and outdoor play 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 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 on the day of inspection and there was a second named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) Both the designated person in charge and the deputy designated person in charge were onsite during the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place which was observed by the inspector, on observation of the staff in practice on the day.

(2) Staff files for the three staff members employed to work directly with the children, as part of their role in the service were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

(a)(b) There were two validated references available in each staff member's file from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.

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

(d) No staff member employed to work directly with the children had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available in each of the three staff members' files demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the national QQI framework of qualifications.

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

A sample of policies, procedures and statements as required and specified in Schedule 5 were reviewed by the inspector.

The following policies, Health and Nutrition policy, Behavioural Management policy, Accident and Incident policy, Staff Training policy including Induction policy, Staff Absenteeism policy, Staff Recruitment policy, Staff Supervision policy, Inclusion policy, Complaints policy, Fire Drill policy and Parents as Partners policy were reviewed and observed to be adequate in content and specific to the service.

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 was an adequate number of qualified staff members directly caring for the children throughout the inspection.

(3) There were 17 early years children aged 3 to 5 years of age, present with 3 staff members directly supervising them.

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 18 records of pre-school children, 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

The board of management and staff in the service ensured that there was appropriate and adequate play materials and resources available both indoors and outdoors for the children attending the service to provide physical environments that promoted children’s imaginary play and stimulated play and learning.

There were clear identifiable areas of interest in the classroom that included a construction transport area, writing skills area, home and kitchen area and library/ rest area. Adequate and suitable play resources were available in each of these areas to encourage the children to play and engage them in learning. Child sized tables and seating provided comfortable areas for them to sit and work on their tabletop activities which included jigsaws, peg boards, matching games, manipulative and connective play resources which were all accessible to the children, stored in visually labelled containers on low level shelving.

The children had a spacious hall area where they each had hanging facilities for their coats and outdoor wear, which was where they changed prior to going outside to play.

The outdoor play area was spacious, covered in grass with rolling hills to provide a physically challenging environment for the children to run, ride their bikes and explore. In the gravelled construction area, of the outdoor play space, trees, appropriate in size, had been planted and swayed gently in the breeze. Tyres placed strategically around the gravelled area ensured that the gravel and construction toys did not stray into the grass area. Balance beams and a crawling tunnel inserted into a hill provided the children with an environment to physically challenge themselves, to explore and play imaginatively.

A wooden cabin with double doors provided a cosy kitchen /home area where the children could also go and shelter. during inclement weather. A mud kitchen was also provided as well as a growing area for the children to grow seasonal flowers , fruit and vegetables.

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 to the service was appropriately secured with a metal secured gate and then a call bell system at the main entrance door, which staff attended to, therefore ensuring that no person could enter the service without staff authorisation and helping to prevent any child exiting the service unsupervised. The outdoor play area located at the side of the premises was also secured with a gate and natural child sized brick wall and strong wooden fencing.

A daily risk assessment of the outdoor play area was observed to be carried out and records demonstrated that this was recorded daily.

The service cleaning materials and equipment were stored appropriately in a secure storage area inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Staff and children were observed to adhere to the service's infection control policy with handwashing observed after toileting, messy play and outdoor play and prior to snack time.

Cleaning schedules demonstrated that staff carried out regular cleaning and maintenance of the physical environment and play equipment both indoors and in the outdoor play area.

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.

At the time of inspection there was no child attending the service who required administration of any type of medication.

Outing:

The service did not operate outings away from the service.

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) On review of staff files the inspector observed that there was one staff member employed in the service with current first aid responder (FAR) training. This staff member was rostered to be present daily with the children in attendance in the service. It is acknowledged that additional staff members are awaiting FAR training and currently held qualifications in basic paediatric first aid.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available stored on a shelf in the classroom and was always available to the children in attendance in the 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) On review of fire drill records maintained the inspector observed that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last fire drill recorded as having been carried out on the 12 September 2024.

(b) Records were also available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the service were last serviced in September 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the front entrance hall and at the back exit door of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

On review of the service's current insurance certificate, clearly displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall, the inspector observed that the insurance certificate detailed cover for a sessional childcare service for 22 children, for the period from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.