

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK060		
Name of Service:	Mullinavat Preschool Playgroup		
Address of Service:	c/o Mullinavat Community Centre, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny		
Eircode:	X91 RK58		
Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Kenneally		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/09/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early years inspectorate Tusla child and Family agency Community Care Cork Road Waterford		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.		
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		

Description of service

Mullinavat Preschool Playgroup is a community based childcare service. The service is located in Mullinavat village Co Kilkenny on the first floor of the community hall on the grounds of the national school. The service was set up in 1984 in a parish house on the main street of Mullinavat and moved to its present location in 2016 to a room in the newly built community hall. Presently the service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs Monday to Friday. The service has use of the large sports hall, library and the kitchen on the ground floor of the centre. A designated play space for the playgroup is defined at the rear of the building and the national school playground is also available for the purpose of outdoor play.

Staffing

There are four staff employed by the pre-school service. The registered provider is part of the staff compliment if required.

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. The inspection focused on the following areas.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 25 - First aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

Regulation 27 – Supervision.

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, 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

(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. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider was part of the staff compliment and available throughout the inspection.

The staff files of 18 employees were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff member's file.
 - (c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána on file for all staff working in the service and all had been re-vetted in the last 3 years.

(4)

There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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)

On the day of inspection, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(3)

There were 21 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff.

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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to meeting children's care and programme of activities.

The service was operated in one room on the first floor of Mullinavat Community Centre. The registered provider explained that the programme was play based and stressing the importance of play as a child's work. The children were observed at free play in the room that was well resourced into areas of interest for them. As part of the settling in process for the new pre-school year 'getting to know me' template was being used with the children who had already completed their handprint, and the pre-school educator had incorporated in discussion with the child details such as hair and eye colour, favourite foods, height, name and date of birth. The registered provider had started to compile examples of the children's work for folders.

The registered provider further explained the documented overview of the weekly plan, this outlined the broad-based schedule of themed /group activities such as a visit to the big hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the use of the large selection of balance bicycles. Interactive time was described as the sociable exchanges at lunch /circle time as well as social occasions such as birthdays as observed on the day. A fourth birthday was in celebration and an occasion of general excitement and anticipation especially around the cake and candles supplied by the service. It was customary in the pre-school for the birthday child to wear a gold hat resembling a crown for the day if they so choose. It was observed to be worn with much pride by the child in question.

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)

Two staff available to work with the children in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid bag in the lobby area.

(b) This first aid bag was suitably equipped, well stocked and available at all times.

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 recording system was provided to ensure a monthly record was maintained of fire drills as conducted and it was noted that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 13 September 2024.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 15 October 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 17 May 2024.

(4)
The fire evacuation procedure for the pre-school was displayed beside the extinguisher in the pre-school room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified, and the registered provider had over 40 years experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The service was conducted on the first floor of the community building, the transition from the ground floor to the first floor was carried out via an indoor stairwell. The protocol for this transition was carefully thought out and documented. Parents came to the fire door exit of the building at drop off and collection times. There was a number of chairs under the stairwell for children to use while waiting after arrival or before parental collection. The transition to the upstairs was observed to be meticulously supervised with a staff member positioned at the top, middle and bottom of the stair well. There was a low-level banister specially erected for the children using the pre-school service and children were continuously reminded to hold on to this when using the stairwell. There was also a lift in the building and was only operated by a staff member if it needed to be used.