

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK085			
Name of Service:	Hospital Community Preschool Playgroup Ltd			
Address of Service:	Community Hall, Main Street, Hospital, Limerick, Co. Limerick			
Eircode:	V35 X2P1			
Name of Registered Provider:	Clodagh Murphy			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date(s) of Inspection:	14/10/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St. Limerick			
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne			
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 community operated service first notified in 1998. The service is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged 2– 6 years, Monday – Friday 8:50 – 12:00 for 38 weeks of the year, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme for eligible children. The service operates from 2 designated rooms at the local community hall which is located on the main street in the village of Hospital, Co Limerick.

The pre-school children have access to 2 rooms, sanitary accommodation area and an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are three staff members who work directly with the children on a daily basis. The registered provider does not work in the service.

The adults who work in the service, all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6 and 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, safety, premises and facilities. 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 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 ensured that the service had a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise if required.

(b) The designated person in charge and the deputy were available on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) There was 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.

(2) The following documents were available on file for the three staff employed and working each day in the service.

(a) There were five written and verified references from past employers, available in respect of the three staff members working at the service.

(b) There was one written and verified reference from other sources furnished by staff on file as required.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff. Garda vetting for the three staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.

(3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each staff member taking up employment at the facility.

(4) The staff members working with the children had the appropriate childcare 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

The policies, and procedures for the service were updated in May 2024. The policies were available on the services social media network, accessible to the staff and parents to view and refer to as required.

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) The service operated a morning sessional session from 08.50am to 12 midday. There were 13 preschool children attending the session with three staff members present. This met the requirements of Regulation 11.

(3) At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

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:

The service ensured that each child's learning and development was facilitated within the daily life of the service. A healthy eating policy was in place at the service and parents provided children with a healthy snack each day for their lunch. All perishable foods were stored in a fridge. Children's drinks were accessible to them on a low shelf at all times during the session.

All children were toilet trained and were able to access the toilets and handwashing facilities independently. Assistance from staff was on hand if required. Handwashing was observed to take place with the encouragement of the staff following messy play and before snack time.

A supply of tissues and wipes were accessible to the children. Lidded bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.

A designated area with soft couches were available to the children if they wished to rest and relax away from more active play areas.

The staff responded to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and gentle way.

The children were supported as they played individually and as part of a group. Children were observed moving freely indoors between the two playrooms working in a small group or on their own and they appeared to be content and happy in their chosen activity

Children had daily access to a cement yard to the rear of the premises containing lots of natural play materials and equipment.

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) Each child was checked in by an adult on arrival to the service. At home time each child was checked out by an adult. The time of arrival and departure was documented for each child.

(3)(a) No person other than a child attending the service, a person dropping or collecting a child, an employee or an unpaid worker could enter the premises without prior approval.

(b) All visitors were signed in and out, documenting their time of arrival and departure and the reason for their visit. The name of the person who admitted them to the building was also recorded.

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 two staff members who had up to date first aid responder training on file.

(2)(a) The registered provider ensured that a suitable equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the preschool 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) Completed monthly fire drills were available on file. The most recent fire drill was recorded on the 15th of September 2025.

(b) A record of the maintenance firefighting equipment in the service was available for review by the Inspectorate. The firefighting equipment were serviced in October 2024.

(4) A fire action notice was clearly displayed in the preschool service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b)The servicing of the smoke alarm for the service was not carried out annually. The date of the last annual service was the 20th of March 2024.

This non-compliance posed a risk to the safety of children and staff attending the service in the event of an emergency

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated in the CAPA response that:

(1)

(b)The smoke alarm system was serviced on the 24th of October 2025. The service will ensure that the smoke alarm system will be serviced on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the updated smoke alarm service record.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of (1)(b) Fire Safety measures.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises appeared safe and secure. The rear entrance gate was closed and there was a system in place to ensure no children could exit the premises unaccompanied and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation. The heating system was off due to the time of the year, but room temperatures were within the normal limits. Openable windows were in place to ensure a means of air circulation.

(d) The outdoor area play area had refurbishment work carried out. A new wall was erected and the cement yard was replaced. The routine cleaning schedules were in place for the internal and external areas. A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in the premises. The premises was rodent proofed, and a pest control company checked the facility on the 18th of February 2025.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available at the service.