

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM012			
Name of Service:	Dromahair Community Playschool Ltd			
Address of Service:	Drumlease Old Health Centre, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim			
Eircode:	F91P825			
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Ryan			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	22/02/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	8
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84			
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello			
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

The service is located in a renovated health centre in Dromahair Co-Leitrim. It consists of one pre-school room and two rooms for school aged children. There is an outdoor play area available for children's use at the back of the premises. A sheltered outdoor play area has been established which allows for outdoor play in inclement weather. The service operates two sessional services operating from 09:00 to 12:00 and 12:15 to 15:15.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there was three adults working in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the preschool children.

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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26, and 28 These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of all three adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Three written and verified past employer references and three references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all three adults employed in the service.

- (c)
A garda vetting disclosure was available for all three adults in the service dated within the previous 36 months. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was not required as all the adults employed in the service that had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4).
All three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 6 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were two adults working directly with 13 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection and two adults working directly with 8 children in the afternoon.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service. In the morning sessional service: Two adults cared for 13 children aged between 3 years and 5 years of age. In the afternoon sessional service: Two adults cared for 8 children aged between 2.5 years to 5 years of age.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

1) (a-i)

Eleven records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of any allergies or special requirements of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year’s inspector.

(4)
The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

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
- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The preschool is based in one open plan room decorated with the children's artwork throughout. The curriculum is evidenced on the walls of the preschool with this month's theme of nature and spring. Circle time on the morning of the inspection focussed on springtime and baby animals. One of the adults had brought in pictures of the baby animals on the farm and the children took time learning about what they eat and how they grow up. The adults took the opportunity to introduce Irish words into this learning opportunity introducing the Irish names of calves and lambs and other spring words. The adults in the service informed the inspector of how they plan the curriculum and complete individual observations on each of the children. These are recorded in individual scrap books and the curriculum is planned to meet the learning goals of the preschool child.

The children were allowed to direct their own sense of play and they moved freely around the various interest areas set up in the room. Construction areas facilitated opportunities for role play and manipulative play. Arts and crafts facilitated a sensory experience for the preschool children and fine motor skills were aided with the use of jigsaws, shape cutters, crayons and paper to draw on. A home corner with a kitchen which included pots, pans, play food encouraged imaginary play, conversation, and interactive play. The outdoor area allowed for gross motor skill development with ride on toys, slides, climbing equipment and an area to play ball. A library area the playroom supported the children's language development and at various times throughout the day, children were observed to go over to the reading area and grab a book. Books were also used at circle time where one of the adults read a book to all the children and all children were involved in asking questions about the story being read.

Children in the preschool brought in their lunch from home in line with the healthy eating policy circulated to parents on enrolment. Childrens lunches consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts. All stored in the fridge in the care room on arrival to the service. Prior to snack time children washed their hands while one child took responsibility for setting the table, another for handing out lunches and drinks. The adults sat with the children at snack time promoting conversation and creating a relaxed atmosphere. Children were encouraged to take their time and were not rushed to eat their snack, when finished children tidied up after themselves supported by the adults. Independence was promoted throughout the preschool, with children toileting independently, but in ear shot of adult if required. It was evident children had learnt various life skills in the preschool, such as putting on their coat independently, packing their bag, coughing into their elbow.

The interactions between the adults and children were observed to be kind and considerate. Adults spoke in a low tone creating an environment of calmness. The adults praised children when completing tasks and children responded positively to this method. The adults promoted an environment of inclusivity, where all children were involved in conversation. Adults were tactile as appropriate offering comfort to children if required. The adults on duty worked well together, with clear communication on what they were doing and when they would be transitioning from one activity to another. The children were observed to be happy and content in the adult's company.

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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with high level fencing preventing access to the outdoor area.
- Waste bins were stored out of reach of children.
- All cleaning products were stored on high level shelving or locked storage cupboard out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels. Child friendly hand wash posters were displayed above sinks.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in the care room.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in the care room.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.

Administration of Medication:

- The adults working in the service were aware of the administration of medication policy.
- One child who had an allergy had a robust support plan in place that was easy to follow should intervention be required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly visible with appropriate signage throughout the pre-school.
- Child friendly picture format, evacuation procedures were displayed in the care room.

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 members of staff trained in paediatric first aid and one staff member trained in First aid responder available to children attending the pre-school service.

(2). (a) (b).

A fully stocked first aid box was available in the preschool room. This box was stored in a conspicuous location within easy reach if required.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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).

The registered provider had a record of all fire drills occurring monthly in the preschool service.

(b).

A record of all firefighting equipment was available and displayed on the notice board in the service. The most recent annual service of 15.05.2023.

(2).

(c). These records were open to inspection by an authorised person on the day.

(3)

The registered provider is aware of their responsibility to retain records in accordance with the guidelines.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in an easy to read picture format in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The preschool provided evidence of insurance in the preschool service for a maximum of 20 children till the 27.03.2024.