

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH017
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Eyes Playgroup
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	7 Beachpark, Laytown, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A92 A607
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nichola Maguire
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	14/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	8	PM	5
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Taaffe
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Bright Eyes Playgroup was established by the registered provider in 2006, initially operating from within a family member's residential home and, since 2010, being operated from a purpose built single story premises located to the rear of the family home. This privately-owned and operated sessional early years service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00 midday and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm each weekday for 38 weeks a year, catering for a maximum of 11 pre-school children at any one time.

### Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single-handedly with a nominated emergency person who is available in close proximity to the premises to attend if required in the event of an emergency. The registered provider holds a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

### 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 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 registered provider 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named emergency contact person available nearby in the event of an emergency.

(b) The registered provider is present in the service and working directly with the children on a daily basis.

(2)(a)(b) Two written references from past employers were available for the registered provider and there were 2 written, validated references from past employers available for the named emergency contact person.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the emergency contact person.

(d) Not applicable as neither the registered provider nor the emergency contact person had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period exceeding 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) The sole-operating registered provider held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The registered provider was working directly with 8 pre-school children aged between 2 years 10 months and 5 years who were present in the service attending on a sessional basis on the morning of the inspection.
- (8)(c) The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service was available to assist at all times when the service was in operation, in the event of an emergency.

### 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.

## Compliance Information

(1) The records maintained for the total number of 14 pre-school children attending either the morning or the afternoon session were inspected and all were found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3)(c) The children's records were open to inspection as requested by the inspector as an authorised person.

## 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) The following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

### Basic needs:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. The registered provider spoke positively and kindly to and about the children during the inspection and were observed initiating conversations and listening carefully to the children's stories and questions, and responding to the children in an interested and engaged manner.
- Healthy snacks were provided for the children by their parents or guardians. The registered provider sat with the children at snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions in a relaxed manner. Water was available for the children to take from low level shelving throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- The close proximity of the sanitary accommodation to the pre-school room facilitated children to use the toilet independently. The service policy requires children to be toilet trained prior to commencement.
- One child was fretful at times on the day of inspection and needed extra comforting and attention which was readily and respectfully provided by the registered provider to good effect.

- All children engaged in outdoor play on the bright, dry and breezy day of the inspection, dressed appropriately in coats, hats and gloves. One child who was sensitive to exposure from UV rays had sunscreen applied in advance of going outdoors, ensuring their skin was protected.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The registered provider demonstrated skilful interaction strategies to support the children's play, learning and development, as evidenced in occasions when the registered provider acted as a play partner with the children and supported the children's participation in their chosen activities.
- The children were observed to be familiar with the registered provider and sought out her guidance and support in a relaxed manner throughout the session. Many children demonstrated a sense of pride in their success during the session and were observed engaging with the registered provider to share their achievements.
- The registered provider was observed displaying anticipation and positive responsiveness when children chose to change or opt out of activities.
- Parents were greeted warmly and communicated with in an unhurried manner on their arrival to the service.

### Physical and material environment:

- The pre-school room was well laid out in a variety of well-resourced interest areas which included a home corner, a shop, a construction area, an arts and crafts area and a library.
- Play materials and equipment including a broad range of jigsaws and materials to support the children's fine motor development were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- A plentiful number of books were available in the library area which supported children's language development.
- A wide range of family photographs were on display at the children's eye level in the service which supported the children to develop a sense of belonging and bridge the gap between the service and home.
- A selection of age-appropriate outdoor play equipment was available in the fully enclosed tarmac-surfaced outdoor play area adjoining the premises. These included ride-on toys, a double tray top table with kinetic sand and moulds, large foam and plastic blocks, a garage with cars, a large plastic tractor

frame with moveable parts, screws and screwdrivers, and a doll's house with furniture and figurines. The registered provider set up foam matting outdoors at a number of points on the ground which facilitated small groups of children to sit and participate in activities together. Portable interlocking plastic fencing was put in place by the registered provider to separate the children who were using the ride-on toys from the children playing with the other play materials, to reduce the risk of injury. A locked shed was provided to store the outdoor play materials.

### 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 premises and outdoor play area was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and for the duration of the inspection. The front gate leading from the roadway into the outdoor play area was locked when the children were playing outside.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance. The inspector was informed that the warm water supply was thermostatically controlled.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchenette was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service. The children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after outdoor and messy play, with assistance provided when necessary.
- Children's lunches which contained perishable food items including meat and dairy products, provided by parents for the morning snack, were refrigerated on arrival to the service. This reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.

- Documented up to date cleaning records were maintained on the premises.
- The outdoor sand pit was fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds and was stored in a shed when the service was not in operation.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- Medication administration records were maintained. The completed records included signed parental consent and were also signed by the child's parent or guardian on collection to document that they were aware of what medication had been administered to their child in the service.
- Care plans were available for two children which outlined specific actions to be undertaken by the registered provider if the children were to become unwell due to pre-existing medical conditions.

### Outings:

- The inspector was informed that the service does not partake in outings.

## 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) The registered provider maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present in a roll book, noting each child's arrival and departure time.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and the inspector recorded her attendance on the premises and the purpose of her visit.

## 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) The registered provider held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training and was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in a readily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) A first aid box was available in the early years service 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 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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by the registered provider, fire drills were carried out monthly.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 11/01/2023 and smoke alarms on 05/05/2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms in the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that there was insurance in place to cover up to 11 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.