

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH184
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Name of Service:	Teresa's Playschool
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Address of Service:	Trim GAA Club, Newhaggard Road, Trim, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 Y9VA
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Name of Registered Provider:	Teresa Egan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan H12YY84
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Mc Kenna
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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

Teresa's Playschool is a privately operated Early Years' Service, located within the building of Trim GAA Club. The sessional service operates from 9.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday, catering for children aged 2 years to 6 years. The area occupied by the preschool service consists of two care rooms with sanitary facilities located directly off each care room. The children attending the service have supervised access to a designated outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. There is car parking available to the front and side of the building.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were six staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider. Four staff were working directly with the 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 and 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, 19, 23 and 26. 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 persons 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

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The room leader was named deputy person in charge when the inspector arrived unannounced. The service manager who is the person in charge arrived following the inspector's arrival and remained present for the remainder of the inspection.

The staff files for the six staff employed by the service were reviewed at this inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

There was a total of seven written and validated references from past employers available for five adults.

There were two written references from past employers available for one adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the six adults employed by the service. 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 available for the one adult whose file indicated that they had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the six employees whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service, including the registered provider, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

A second written validated reference was not on file for three adults.

Two written references provided for one adult were not validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

Five validated references for the four adults were submitted.

Ensure that references are validated prior to start date, with a checklist implemented.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9.

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 there were an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the Inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity during the inspection:

During free flow play two adults were present in each care room, namely the Arts Room and Play Room supervising a total of 21 children.

At set times such as outdoor time and snack time the following ratios were in place;

Two adults cared for 8 children aged 3 years 13 months to 4 years 7 months in the Arts Room.

Two adults cared for 13 children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years 8 months in the Play Room.

The person in charge was super numeracy, assisting if required with the care of the children.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children take in their own snack from home, which is stored in the refrigerator until snack time. Children used their own named placemats at snack time. Snack time was observed to be a relaxed time where adults and children engaged in conversations, with comments noted on how "yummy" and healthy the children's snacks were. Snacks included a variety of sandwiches, fruits, vegetables, meats and individual drinkers containing water. Adults were observed to sit with the children and have a snack also.
- Children were encouraged to use the toilet by themselves. Adults remained close by if children required assistance. Adults encouraged the children to use a tissue and wash their hands after sneezing. The children had appropriate outdoor clothing and had their own spare set of clothes in the preschool service. Both care rooms engaged in supervised outdoor play time during the inspection.

- The children had access to a variety of resources and materials. The indoor environments available to the children were laid out to include specific themed areas for example; a reading area, arts and crafts, table top jigsaws, shop play, dress up and sand play. Additional play materials and resources were available in storage boxes between both play rooms. Children were observed to have freedom of choice in their preschool environment, which was facilitated through the free-flowing morning time activities between both care rooms. An area for rest was provided in both play rooms to include a soft mat/ soft child sized sofa should a child require a rest throughout the preschool session. The designated outdoor area had a soft ground surface, with balance toys, play kitchen, skittle and balls, ball runs, large building blocks and a wooden climbing structure suitable for children's use.

Supporting Relationships:

- The adults demonstrated positive relationships with the children. The adults advised the inspector as it was still early in the new preschool term that all children were facilitated to settle in at a pace that suited the child. This was observed on the day of inspection where a child settling in was collected earlier than the end of session time. The adults praised children on jobs well done using words such as "super duper" and encouraged children's independence by assisting them to care for their own belongings. The adults were observed to encourage the children to share and work together, with children observed to positively engage with their peers. Adults were observed to get down to the level of the child when interacting and while providing one on one care.
- Displays of creative artwork such as sticking and gluing, self-portraits and family portraits with children's comments were on display. On the day of the inspection the children were actively engaged and were observed to play with sand, playdough, reading books, imaginary shop play, table top activities, drawing and sticking with glue, and taking part in a supervised paper cutting activity.
- The children in attendance were familiar with the routine and understood it. They appeared content and happy in their play environments. The staff team were observed to work well together, ensuring transitions were smooth for the children with little to no interruptions observed.
- Communication with parents occurs at pick up and drop off times, which was observed on the day of inspection where staff advised a parent on their child's progress on settling in.

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:

- Upon the inspector's arrival and throughout the inspection the entrance doors remained locked when not in use.
- The play equipment available to the children was maintained in good repair.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed.
- Children were adequately supervised throughout the inspection process.

Infection Control:

- Bins for the disposal of paper handtowels and tissues were provided.
- Warm running water, hand soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play time, before snack time and after sneezing.
- Play equipment and toys used by the children were maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.
- Daily cleaning schedules and risk assessments were completed and displayed in both care rooms.

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 ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times immediately available to the children attending the preschool service as evidenced by two staff members first aid training records.
- (2) (a) & (b) The first aid boxes were stored in a conspicuous location in both care rooms, and available to the children attending the preschool 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 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 written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place 24 September 2024, just prior to the inspector's arrival at the service.
- (b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the fire detection and alarm system had been serviced on 26 February 2024.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location throughout the preschool service.