

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN059
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Name of Service:	Tru Beginnings Community Playgroup Ltd
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Address of Service:	Knockconan, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 DY07
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Markey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S.Skinnader and M.Flood
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Tru Beginnings Community Playgroup Ltd have operated as a community run childcare service since 1997. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged from 0 - 6 years of age. The service is open from 07:45 to 17:30 each weekday and caters for a maximum of 90 children. The service operates from rooms in a community/school building located in a rural area outside the village of Emyvale Co. Monaghan. The service has 5 care rooms in operation namely: The Baby Room which was located in a separate building to the side of the service, the Toddler Room, the Pre-Preschool Room, Preschool Rooms 1 and 2 all of which were located in the main building. There is a separate sleep room off the Baby Room and 2 others off the Toddler Room. There are nappy changing and sanitary accommodations, a kitchen and an office. The service has large outdoor area to the side of the service and access to the general-purpose hall in the main building.

Staffing

There were 26 adults employed in the service. Nineteen staff were working directly with the children including the service manager, there were 2 staff members employed in administrative duties 1 of whom also worked with the school aged children. One staff member was employed as a cook, 2 staff worked as cleaners one of whom worked with the SAC in the afternoon. There were 1 student and 1 adult present in the morning in a voluntary supernumerary capacity, both of these adults worked with the school aged children in the afternoon.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 9,11,19,26,28 and 29 and as a result, the scope of the inspection included Preschool Rooms 1 and 2, the Pre-Preschool Room and the Toddler Room.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the service manager staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the 19 children from Preschool Room 2 were observed to have access to an extra room directly off the care room which was a sectioned off area of the general-purpose hall. It is acknowledged that there was no increase in the number of children attending the room and that a change in circumstances form has been submitted in relation to the use of this room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection we decided to close off the extension until the change of circumstance is approved. In future we will apply and wait for change of circumstance granted before using extra space. The deputy manager has taken responsibility for this going forward.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response and assurances given. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The service manager was the deputy in charge and was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained throughout the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service and staff were familiar with the deputy person in charge.

The staff files for all staff members were reviewed on the last inspection and met compliance. The staff files for the 5 staff members, the student, 1 cleaner / SAC and the adult present in a voluntary capacity who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff members.

(2)(a) & (b)

There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 5 new members of staff, the cleaner/SAC staff member, the student and the adult present in a supernumerary capacity.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 8 new staff. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all other staff members and all except 1 were found to be within the re-vetting timeframes as documented in the non-compliance below in Regulation 23.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was available for the 4 new staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the 4 of the 5 new members of staff, who worked directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification or letter of equivalency.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) One staff member did not have documentary evidence or letter of equivalency to show their qualification met the required minimum Level 5 Childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member had provided a letter from her university stating she was completing her Early Years degree and had completed year 1.

Following the inspection the student forwarded the documents required to the DCEDIY for clarification.

We requested a more detailed letter from the college to forward to DCEDIY clarifying that the student had completed year one and was nearing completion of year two of a degree that is listed on the list of recognised qualifications.

In future we will ask the students to complete the relevant application and forward it to the DCEDIY for confirmation before employing as a staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of letter of equivalency of qualification from DCEDIY.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed.

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.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:
- Preschool Room 1:**
- There were 18 preschool children (aged 3 to 4 years) attending this room with 2 staff.
- The child adult ratios were correct.
- Preschool Room 2:**
- There were 19 preschool children (aged 3 years to 4 years) attending this room with 2 staff, 1 student and 1 adult present in a supernumerary/voluntary capacity.
- The child adult ratios were correct.
- The Pre-Preschool Room:**
- There were 11 preschool children (aged 2 years 4 months to 3 years and 1 month) attending this room with 2 staff.
- The child adult ratios were correct.
- The Toddler Room:**
- There were 9 preschool children (aged 1 year 6 months to 2 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.
- The child adult ratios were correct.
- The Baby Room:**

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

There were 6 preschool children attending this room with 2 adults. The child adult ratios were correct.

(8) Documentary evidence was available to show there were a minimum of 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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

There were 5 care rooms in operation in the service namely the Preschool Rooms 1 and 2, the Pre-Preschool Room, Toddler Room and the Baby Room. The Baby Room did not form part of the inspection under Regulation 19(1)(a).

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service.

Basic needs:

- The children had free movement in the care rooms and most children had a change of environment to the outdoor areas.
- In the Toddler Room child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children's routines. The staff were also alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping when the inspectors arrived at the service and at various intervals throughout the day.
- Some of the children in Preschool Room 2 also had access to the general-purpose hall for a story and for one child to ride their balance bike and play with building bricks and a balloon.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and nappies were observed to be changed in a prompt manner. Pleasant interactions were observed between the staff member and children during nappy changing. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children in the various rooms after toileting.
- The children in the Preschool Rooms all brought in their own lunches however on the day of inspection which was Pyjama Day the children in the rooms also made their own pizzas. The dinner provided on the day of inspection was prepared by the resident cook and was observed to consist of potatoes, vegetables, fish fingers and gravy. Drinks were available to the children. Breakfast was provided by the service and

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

was reported to consist of cereals, porridge and toast. The morning and afternoon snacks consisted of toast and fruit and pancakes and yoghurts.

- Staff were familiar with the plan in place to support a child with additional needs and support was also readily available from the service manager on the day of inspection.

Supporting Relationships:

- There was a key worker system in place in the service and staff names and key children were on display. Key workers are responsible for the documentation of their group of children's emerging interests and observations.
- Communication with parents was predominantly informally at drop off and pick up. Email and telephone conversations were also used. The parents of children attending the Toddler Room received a written daily record of "all about my day in creche". This daily record provides information relating to the children's food intake, toileting /nappies and sleep on a given day.
- The staff were observed to use gentle tones and positive language when communicating with children for example "can I help you?". "...you are upset...are you ok?" "...show me your muscles...will you please lift your chairs back to your tables and we will do some art...thank you ...you are so strong...".
- Minor behavioural issues such as pushing were dealt with swiftly by staff and not allowed to escalate for example a staff member explaining that "... doesn't like that" "nice and gentle...we don't push our friends...".

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for 1 staff member.
2. In Preschool Room 2 the cupboard under the sink was unlocked and contained the cleaning spray. This was potentially accessible to the children and a health and safety risk.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

- There was no hot water provided at the sanitary accommodation used by the children from Preschool Room 2, neither at the sink directly outside the care room or at the sink in the sanitary accommodation off the hall. This does not allow for effective hand washing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- We had overlooked a staff members end date and was late applying for the vetting. The completed vetting came through on the 16/03/2026. In future we will ensure all re-vetting is applied for well in advance of the expiry date.
The manager has taken responsibility to remind all staff to complete it as soon as it arrives in their emails.
- The bottle was removed immediately and the room leader and assistants were made aware of the danger of detergent being left in a low cupboard. The room leader and assistants took responsibility to ensure all detergent bottles are kept in the higher presses. The room leader has also taken the responsibility to inform all students and volunteers, the importance of safe guarding all children from harm and ensuring health and safety at all times.

Infection Control:

- We contacted the plumber and he found issues with the hot water tank in the boiler house.
The plumber advised us to go with under sink hot water units for both areas and bypass the tank.
Work has been completed. Installation of under sink water heaters to ensure we have hot water in all areas and not depending on the buildings hot water system which is controlled by the landlord.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of vetting disclosure.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting documentation were reviewed and accepted. The non-compliances identified in Regulation 23 are addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 all fire drills which had been completed in the service, the last recorded 27/2/25.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment dated 19/5/25 and 19/3/25 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentary evidence was available of adequate insurance cover for up to 100 children expiring on 27/3/26.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(c) The care rooms were adequately heated and comfortable.

(e) The sanitary accommodation off Preschool Room 1 has been renovated. There is new wall to ceiling wall panelling, new toilets and a door on each toilet. There is 1 wash hand basing in the sanitary accommodation and 1 sink directly outside the door which the children also accessed.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) In Preschool Room 1 there was no step up for the children to access the sink in the care room outside the sanitary accommodation. Additionally, the paper towel dispenser was located high up on the wall outside the sanitary accommodation and could not be accessed by the children who needed to dry their hands.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A spare step-up was placed at the sink after inspection and a risk assessment was carried out.

The step-up is not a risk as it is close to the sink unit and out of way of traffic.

Going forward when a step-up is removed as it is damaged, a new one will be replaced immediately.

We have purchased 2 spare step-up's to ensure we will always have one available in case of damage to one in use.

Registered provider confirmed via email with photographic evidence that the paper towels are now accessible to the children for hand drying.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's responses and photographic evidence submitted were reviewed and accepted. The non-compliances have been addressed.