

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:	Rowena McDermot
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection: Day 1	19/06/2024
Day 2	20/06/2024

No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	58	PM	34
	Day 2	52		-

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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Description of service

Tru Beginnings Community Playgroup Ltd have been operating 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 18:00 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: Preschool Rooms 1 and 2, the Toddler Room, the Pre-Preschool Room located in the main building and the Baby Room in a separate building to the side of the service. 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. Twenty - one 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 further staff worked with school aged child and 1 of these also worked as a cleaner in the morning. There were 6 students in the service.

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, 19 and 25; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16, 20, 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a number of named deputy persons to deputise as required. Two of the deputy persons in charge were on the premises when the inspectors arrived. The person in charge arrived at the premises at approximately 11:20.

(2) Following a discussion with the service manager and a review of the staff roster it was confirmed to the inspectors that there were 4 new staff members and 5 students present in the service since the last inspection.

(a) and (b) The staff files in relation to the 4 new staff members, 1 additional staff member and the 5 students were reviewed on the day of inspection:

- Two written and validated references from a past employer or another source were available for 4 of the 5 staff members and for the 5 students.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for 5 staff members and 4 students. Garda vetting was not required for the 5th student who was under 18 years of age.

Garda Vetting disclosures were also reviewed for an additional 6 members of staff employed in the service. However, 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. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Not applicable as from the documentary evidence available for inspection international police vetting was not required.

(4) Of the 5 new staff files reviewed four adults working directly with the preschool children had a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Of the staff files reviewed, one staff member did not have 2 written and validated references.

(4) One staff member observed working directly with the preschool children did not have documentary evidence of a major childcare award at a minimum Level 5.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were obtained for the staff member and forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

The registered provider will ensure no staff are employed until all the documentation including written references are on file.

(4) The student teacher is finishing work within the service this week as she was unable to verify confirmation of her degree from the college.

The manager will ensure to confirm that all students working during the summer holidays have the necessary childcare qualifications by applying for confirmation of degrees being suitable for working in Early Years setting as soon as the student teachers or early years students show interest in summer work in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of references.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted and the non-compliances have been addressed.

This will be for review at the next inspection.

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.

On day 1 of inspection 19/6/2024:

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

Preschool Room 1:

There were 12 preschool children (aged 3 to 4 years) attending this room with 1 staff and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

Preschool Room 2:

There were 16 preschool children (aged 4 years to 5 years) attending this room with 2 staff and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Pre-Preschool Room:

There were 13 preschool children (aged 2 years 8 months to 3 years) attending this room with 2 staff and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Toddler Room:

There were 9 preschool children (aged 1 to 2 years) attending this room with 2 childcare staff and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Baby Room:

There were 8 preschool children aged (10 months to 1 year and 6 months) attending this room with 3 adults and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

On Day 2 of inspection 20/6/2024:

(2) the following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

Preschool Room 1:

There were 14 preschool children (aged 3 to 4 years) attending this room with 3 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

Preschool Room 2:

There were 13 preschool children (aged 4 - 5 years) attending this room with 2 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Pre-Preschool Room:

There were 11 preschool children (aged 2 Years 8 months to 3 years) attending this room with 3 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Toddler Room:

There were 7 preschool children (aged 1 year to 2 years) attending this room with 2 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The Baby Room:

There were 7 preschool children aged (10 months to 1 year and 6 months) attending this room with 3 staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g. staff rotas and children’s attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A curriculum vitae was not available for inspection for 1 member of staff to confirm the qualification, experience or the requirement of international police vetting if applicable.

(i) The system for recording daily staff attendance was inadequate. The service uses a whiteboard to record staff working on a daily basis over the period of a week and this white board is wiped cleaned at the end of the week. The system did not have capacity to maintain historical records of staff attendance for example on the 7/6/24 there were 15 children present in the Toddler Room and only 2 staff were documented as being signed in and present in the room. Three were required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)The curriculum vitae was obtained, and copy submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

The manager has taken responsibility that all required documents will be on file before staff members commence working in the setting.

(i)Daily staff attendance records are now saved electronically also the historical records of staff moving rooms.

The deputy manager has taken responsibility to keep the staff daily attendance record sheets both past and present on file. These records will reflect changes if any, taking place throughout the day and will be available for inspection.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted, the non-compliance is addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

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 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: namely Preschool Rooms 1 and 2, the Pre-Preschool Room, the Toddler Room and the Baby Room. For the purpose of the report Preschool Room 1 and 2, the Pre-Preschool Room and the Toddler Room are the focus of this inspection.

(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:

- Healthy eating was promoted in the service and there was a menu on display. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves and assistance was also provided if required. In all the rooms the dinners were of a suitable consistency for the age and development of the children. Dinner consisted of pasta bolognaise and the option of potatoes and mixed vegetables and mince for the Baby Room. Mealtimes were observed to be a social occasion with staff observed sitting at the tables and encouraging conversation with the group.
- Potable drinking water was available in the service and in the preschool rooms the children's drink cups were freely accessible to the children.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children who were toilet trained and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.

- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with lots of friendly interaction observed between children and staff in all rooms.
- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before mealtimes and after toileting; and noses were wiped. The children were dressed appropriately for going outside and suncream was also applied.
- The children from all rooms availed of a change of environment to the outside areas throughout the day.

Supporting Relationships

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms. The staff in the Toddler Room were observed sitting on the floor with the children and interacting with them in a warm and supportive manner. In the preschool rooms children's independence was promoted for the children was used. For example, the children were encouraged to come and have their meal served to them. They then returned their plates when finished.
- During dinner time staff were observed sitting at the tables and talking to the children in different rooms.
- Daily communication sheets were in use in the Toddler and Pre-Preschool Rooms to support the sharing of information between the service and home. This included information relating to toileting, meals, snacks, sleep time and any additional care needs. The staff reported that most communication with parents is conducted through this method or verbally at collection and drop off. Phone calls, email and phone messaging was also used.
- A key worker system was in operation in the care rooms and the information pertaining to the child and the allocated key workers were on display.
- Throughout the service transitions were observed to be smooth between activities and the children were supported by the staff. The children were very familiar with the daily routine e.g. in the Pre-Preschool Room once the dinner was finished, the children who took a nap started to get themselves ready for their sleep.
- Children's choices and interests were facilitated in the service e.g. children who did not want to take part in sports day were facilitated to play with a range of alternative toys and equipment e.g. water and bubbles, large play trays, connectors and garage mats with cars and trucks.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The children attending all the care rooms had access to a suitable soft area for reading or taking a rest when required. The areas consisted of soft mats, cushions and plastic and fabric covered sofas.

There were 3 cot rooms; one off the Baby Room with 5 cots and two off the Toddler Room, the first with 2 cots and the second with 2 standard cots and 2 space saver cots. Daybeds were set up in the Pre-Preschool Room which became a designated sleep room after lunch for children aged over 2 years. Daybeds were also available for any child from the Preschool Rooms should they require a sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. One child aged 2 years 4 months was observed sleeping in a 'space saving cot' which was only suitable for children up to a maximum age of 12 months.
2. Cot Room 1 off the Toddler Room was cluttered with plastic storage boxes, a cardboard box and a baby rocker chair. This is a safety risk, should the room require evacuation in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. The staff have taken responsibility to ensure the children are placed in a cot size suitable for their age. The room leader has taken responsibility to ensure all children are sleeping in cots suitable for their age.
2. Both storage boxes and baby rocker have been removed from the sleep room. New hooks have been placed in the sleep room for the children's sleep sheet bags. The room leader has taken responsibility to ensure the sleep room is kept free from clutter.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's responses have been reviewed and the non-compliances addressed.

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

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for all staff members and students for whom it was required. However, 2 of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Sharp corners which are a potential injury hazard were unprotected in the Toddler Room e.g. kitchen area, stainless steel drawer unit located in the soft area, tables and in Preschool Room 2 the corners on the wooden work bench.
Additionally, the room risk assessment on display in the Toddler Room was last dated week commencing 29th April 2024.
3. In the outdoor 'stone area' sharp nails were exposed on the timber surrounding the base of the fence. This was a potential injury hazard.
4. In Preschool Room 2 a disinfectant spray bottle was sitting on the sink area and accessible to the preschool children. This is a health and safety risk.

Safe Sleep:

5. A cardboard wall thermometer was in use in the Pre-Preschool Room (when this room was converted to a sleep room) and also in the sleep rooms off the Toddler Room to record the room temperatures. This is not an accurate means of recording a room temperature.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An application was made for updated Garda Vetting and vetting disclosures were received.
The manager has taken responsibility to update garda vetting for all staff every three years in line with The Early Years Inspectorate Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 – Renewal of garda vetting.
2. Sharp corners have been secured with furniture corner guards in the toddler room and preschool room 2.
The room leaders have taken responsibility to ensure all sharp edges are covered and will inform the deputy manager if any edges become a hazard concern.
3. The sharp nails exposed on the timber in the outdoor stone area were removed and replaced leaving no injury hazard. The toddler risk assessment document in display has been updated and is currently updated daily.
Going forward, the deputy manager together with all staff will be vigilant for any potential injury hazard.
4. The staff were made aware of the importance of returning the disinfectant spray bottle to the press.
The room leader has taken responsibility together with all staff to ensure disinfectant bottles are stored safely out of children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

5. All rooms have been replaced with new temperature and humidity battery/electricity operated monitors.
The manager replaced the cardboard wall thermometer with a battery monitor and the room leader has taken responsibility to replace batteries when required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation and is satisfied the non-compliances have been addressed. These will be for review at the next inspection.

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 there was a person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) at all times in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box for the children in the service available at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The sanitary area of Preschool Room 1 was in a state of disrepair as required as evidenced by the following observations;

1. Large brown stains were evident on the ceiling of the sanitary area.
2. Black stains and dirt were evident on the wall beside the wash hand basin. The service manager confirmed that a 2nd sink had been present in this area but had been removed.

(e) The sanitary facilities in Preschool Room 1 were inadequate and unsuitable for the following reasons;

1. There was 1 wash hand basin in the sanitary area when 2 were required.
2. The 2 toilets available while partitioned did not have any doors. This does not provide a sealed off cubicle so as to protect the dignity and privacy of the preschool children using the sanitary facilities at the same time. It is acknowledged that the person in charge stated that plans are in place to refurbish this area.

- Although not observed on the day of inspection the service had insufficient nappy changing facilities to accommodate the number of children in nappies attending the Toddler Room. One nappy changing mat was available for use while records demonstrated that on some dates 15 children were in attendance. This was also confirmed by the staff. The requirement is that 1 nappy changing mat and 1 wash hand basin is available for every 11 children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
- The sanitary area in preschool room 1 is under repair and being refurbished at present. Piping is being removed to make space to fit cubicle doors and PVC panelling on walls and ceiling is being painted plus new flooring and toilets have been ordered.
 - The sink has been removed to make space for cubicle door. Two toilets and two sink units across the hall from the preschool room are available to the children if required, during renovations.
- (e)
- There is one handwash basin in the toilet area and one sink outside the door for children to wash their hands at present. Plumber looking at space to fit second sink unit. The manager is looking at getting a second sink installed and will inform inspector upon completion.
 - Cubicle doors are being attached during renovations and will be fitted when the plumbing work is completed.
 - A second nappy changing unit has been purchased and attached to the wall in the toilet area leaving 2 nappy changing units and two sinks available to cater for a number of children attending the toddler room.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was reviewed by the inspector.

The non-compliance in relation to the provision of additional nappy changing unit has been addressed

As renovation work is ongoing the non-compliance for the remaining non-compliances have not been adequately addressed, however it is acknowledged that the children have access to 2 further toilets and wash hand basins in the hall area outside the care room.