

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN059
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tru Beginnings Community Playgroup Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Knockconan, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 DY07
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rowena Mc Dermot
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Dates of Inspection: Day 1</b>	24/10/2023
<b>Day 2</b>	27/10/2023

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	65	PM	50
	AM	62	PM	-

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	No. 18 The Grange, Plantation Walk, Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

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 to 6 years of age. The service is open from 07:45 to 18:00pm 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 and the Baby Room. There is a separate sleep room off the Baby Room and another two 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.

### Staffing

There were 26 adults employed in the service. Nineteen staff were working directly with the children including the service manager, there was 1 staff member employed in administrative duties and with the school age children, 2 staff members employed as a cooks/cleaner and 2 other members of staff employed to work with the school aged children. In addition, there was 1 adult employed in a community employment scheme and 1 student 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.

A sampling process was used and as a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Room, the Pre – Preschool Room, Preschool Room 1 and sleep rooms 1 and 2 in the Toddler Room.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19 and 20, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the person in charge, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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 named deputy person to deputise as required. The deputy in charge was present on Day 1 of inspection and both were on the premises on Day 2 of inspection.

The following was recorded in respect of all 26 staff files reviewed.

(2)(a) and (b) Two written and validated references were available for 22 members of staff. Two staff members had 1 written and validated reference each.

(c) Evidence of the 26 completed Garda vetting disclosures for all the staff members were available for review.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 5 of the 6 staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult. A second international police vetting for 1 of these members of staff was also available.

(4) The 19 staff members working directly with the children had an appropriate childcare qualification at a minimum Level 5.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two members of staff did not have 2 written and validated references.

Two members of staff did not have a second written and validated reference.

(d) International police vetting was not available for one member of staff who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a) References were received for 4 members of staff and forwarded to the inspector.

In future the manager will ensure all references are on file before staff members start working in the service. The manager will ensure international police vetting will be on file if staff have lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for 6 months or more.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

References submitted.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and supporting evidence was reviewed.

The non-compliances in relation to Regulation 9(2)(a) have been addressed.

The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9(2)(d) has not been addressed adequately and remains outstanding.

## 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 22/10/2023:

(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 2 to 4 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

An additional adult worked as a floater in this room for periods of time. The child adult ratios were correct.

#### **Preschool Room 2:**

There were 21 preschool children (aged 3 years to 5 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

#### **The Pre-Preschool Room:**

There were 11 preschool children (aged 2 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

#### **The Toddler Room:**

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

The child adult ratios were correct.

#### **The Baby Room:**

There were 8 preschool children aged (8 months to 1 year and 7 months) attending this room with 3 adults.

The child adult ratios were correct.

**On Day 2 of inspection 27/10/2023:**

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

**Preschool Room 1:**

There were 17 preschool children (aged 2 to 4 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

An additional adult worked as a floater in this room for periods of time. The child adult ratios were correct.

**Preschool Room 2:**

There were 19 preschool children (aged 3 years to 5 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

**The Pre-Preschool Room:**

There were 13 preschool children (aged 2 Years) attending this room with 3 childcare 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 childcare staff.

The child adult ratios were correct.

**The Baby Room:**

There were 6 preschool children aged (8 months to 1 year and 7 months) attending this room with 2 adults.

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 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, the Pre-Preschool Room and the Baby Room were reviewed.

(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:

- In the Baby Room child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children's routines and also were alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping at various intervals in the sleep room and those that were finding it difficult to settle were nursed by staff members or rocked in a bouncy chair and then transferred into a cot in the sleep room. Children attending the Pre-preschool Room were facilitated to sleep after dinner when the room was converted to a sleep area.
- The children were observed to move freely in the care rooms and most children also had a change of environment into the outdoor areas on a number of occasions. All children were dressed appropriately to go outside. Some of the children from the Baby Room were placed in buggies and taken for a walk around the outdoor areas.
- Healthy eating was promoted in the service as was evident by the dinner and snacks provided by the service in the various rooms. Dinner on the 1<sup>st</sup> day was minced beef, potatoes, vegetables and gravy which was of an age-appropriate consistency for all the children. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day the dinner provided consisted of fish fingers, mash potatoes, fresh vegetables and gravy. A variety of fresh fruit, pancakes and toast and beans were provided for morning and afternoon snack times. Assistance was given to the older children who required help with opening lunches and to the younger children who required feeding. The children's drinks cups and bottles were stored in the care rooms, and they were accessible as required. It was reported by staff that bottles of powdered infant formula were sent in ready made by the parents.

- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children the various rooms after toileting.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- Tissues were available in all the rooms and attention was given to personal care such as nose blowing, brushing hairs, use of bibs for feeding and cleaning faces.

### Supporting Relationships

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms. In the Baby Room staff were observed constantly talking with the babies and letting the children know what they were going to do such as *“will we wash your hands”* and *“will we get you ready to have a sleep”*. The staff in the rooms were observed sitting on the floor with the children and interacting with them in a warm and supportive manner. In the preschool room, positive language and encouragement that promoted independence for the children was used. For example, during dinner time staff were observed sitting at the tables and talking to the children *“well done eating your dinner....you’re doing it all by yourself....”*
- Daily communication sheets were in use in the Baby 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. In the Pre-preschool Room the staff described how documentary evidence is maintained of each child’s ‘likes’ and their emerging interests. This information is then used to inform curriculum planning. This promotes the development and sustainment of secure and positive relationships between the staff and children and supports their interest and development.

## Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment were available in each of the care rooms that support many areas of development such as fine motor skills, role play, speech and language and sensory development. It was also reported in the rooms that staff rotate equipment from a store supply. Staff in the Pre-preschool and Preschool Rooms encouraged sensory play with a pumpkin pulp, water and glitter activity and a playdough activity. The staff members also used the activities to encourage conversations in relation to colours, textures and recall on how to make the playdough and to engage in turn taking.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in all rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- In the Baby Room the children's positions were changed regularly between different pieces of equipment which included use of a bouncy chair, bouncy activity centre, tummy time on soft matting, playing in a ball pool and sitting with support cushions. Low Level entertainer systems were available in the room to encourage the children to pull themselves up. An adult chair was available in the Baby Room for the staff to sit, nurse and comfort the children as required.

## Programme of Activities

- Throughout the service transitions were observed to be smooth between activities and the children were supported by the staff.
- A variety of the children's art activities were on display throughout the service which included toilet roll monkeys, an alligator, footprint art, fireworks and paper plate pumpkins and pumpkins in a bag painting.
- The children were observed to engage in a variety of activities that promoted many areas of development including; sensory play, role play, art activities, large and small group time activities, outdoor play and games in the community hall.

## Non-Compliance Information

In the Pre-preschool Room, the toilet door was wedged open when the children were using the toilet. This does not maintain the dignity and privacy of the child as some children were still seated at tables eating their dinner and could see directly into the toilet.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

In the Pre-preschool Room, the toilet door is now closed at all times to allow children dignity and privacy when using the toilet.

All staff in the Pre-preschool Room have been made aware of the importance of closing the door to the toilet.

The room leader will ensure the toilet door is kept closed.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted, and this will be reviewed at the next inspection. The non-compliance has been addressed.

### 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.*

*(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

*(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,*

#### 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 2 off the Toddler Room, the first with 2 cots and the second with 4 space saver cots. Daybeds were set up in the Pre-Preschool Room which became a designated sleep room after lunch for children who were aged over 2 years to sleep on. Daybeds were also available for any child from the Preschool Rooms should they require a sleep.

(3)(a) The children attending all rooms were provided with a change of environment to the outdoor areas during the inspection. The enclosed outdoor play areas were located to the side of the premises:

**Area 1:** had an artificial grass surface with a large wooden gazabo, a mud kitchen, climbing ramp and tunnel, balls, cones and tyres.

**Areas 2 and 3:** were tarmacked areas where ride-on toys were used.

**Area 4:** Consisted of a gravel pit with diggers.

### 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. Some of the tables in the care rooms and some of the toy kitchen units in Preschool 1 had sharp unprotected corners which are a safety risk. In the Pre-preschool Room some low-level shelving units also had sharp corners exposed.
2. In outdoor area 4, pieces of the underlay were exposed which is a potential trip hazard.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control risks were observed in the Pre-preschool Room;

1. The children's hands were not observed being washed after play in the community hall. The children returned to the classroom and commenced playing together at the large sensory play trays.
2. There was one container of liquid soap observed in use between the 2 toilets. As a result when the soap was in use in one toilet children accessing the 2nd toilet did not use soap for handwashing.
3. One staff member was observed to wipe down the nappy changing mat with the gloves used to change the nappy still on. This is a cross infection risk.
4. The bin observed in use for the disposal of nappies was unsuitable, as the staff were observed to lift the lid with their hands and to forcibly push the soiled nappies into the bin.

#### Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective Actions:

##### General Safety:

1. Protective covers have been attached to all sharp edges on tables and units in all rooms.
2. The outdoor area 4, was raked and stones spread evenly over the complete area and all underlay covered. Extra stones were ordered and spread over the area.

### Infection Control:

3. Children's hands are now washed after returning to the room from the hall or other rooms.
4. Two containers of soap are now available, one in each toilet area.
5. Staff member was made aware of the danger of cross infection by keeping the gloves on to clean down the mat.
6. Bin was replaced immediately with a new pedal bin.

### Preventive Actions

1. Deputy manager will check weekly and the room leaders will ensure all sharp edges are covered.
2. Room leaders will ensure no underlay is showing before they enter the area and will rake the stones to keep the area evenly covered with stones.
3. Deputy manager will keep a weekly check.
4. The staff member was made aware of the danger of cross infection. All staff in the Pre-preschool Room along with the deputy manager spent some time revisiting the nappy changing policy and ensuring all staff follow the correct procedures.
5. The room leader will ensure there is soap available in both hand washing areas.  
The room leader along with the deputy manager will ensure all policies and procedures are followed.
6. The room leader will ensure there is a suitable nappy bin available at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety and Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The Inspectorate reviewed the response from the registered provider. The non-compliances in Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.