

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO012
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Name of Service:	Ballyglass Community Childcare Service
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Address of Service:	Ballyglass, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F12 VW77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breege Jennings
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	31/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell and L Costello
Title:	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).

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Description of service

Ballyglass Community Childcare Service is a community childcare service located in Ballyglass in County Mayo. The service is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional services to children aged from 0-6 years of age and is open from 8am to 5.30pm. The service is registered to provide school age childcare services.

The premises is a purpose built, detached, single-storey building with four preschool playrooms, two sleep rooms, a sensory room, kitchen, staff room, office and sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor play area with a range of outdoor play equipment is provided on the premises.

Staffing

There are 20 adults in the service including a manager, office administrator, childcare and kitchen staff. The registered provider does not work directly 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 19, 23 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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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

(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.

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Compliance Information

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge on the day it was determined that vetting for seven staff members required review. Six of these staff members work directly with the children. A total of seven files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for five staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

The following information was made available for inspection for the seven staff whose vetting files were reviewed:

- (2) (a) Two written, validated references from past employers particularly their most recent employers were available for the seven adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. 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) International police vetting was available for one of the staff who worked directly with the children.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for the six new staff who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting information was unavailable for inspection:

- (2) (a) Evidence of the validation of one reference from a past employer was required for one adult.
- (c) The garda vetting documents on file for one adult did not meet the regulatory requirements.
- (d) An International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) was required for one staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (a) The written reference for the staff member in question has been validated. A checklist has been devised which will be completed before an employee commences employment in the service and approved by the Manager.
- (c) Updated Garda vetting documents were obtained for the adult. The service has devised a Garda vetting

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schedule which clearly shows when employees must be re-vetted and will submit applications in a timely manner. A checklist will be completed before an employee commences employment in the service and approved by the Manager.

(d) The staff member has applied for an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) which may take up to 20 days to be issued. The certificate will be submitted to the Inspectorate on receipt.

A question relating to international police vetting requirements will be included in all future interviews. A checklist will be completed before an employee commences employment in the service and approved by the Manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the validated reference, updated Garda vetting document, employment checklist, interview question template, receipt of adult's application for ICPC.

Summary Comment

Following review of the actions taken and evidence submitted by the service, section (2)(d) remains non-compliant as an International Child Protection Certificate remains outstanding for one adult. The service has stated that the certificate will be submitted to the Inspectorate on receipt.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) There were 9 adults working directly with 24 children in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. The designated person in charge on the day also provided direct care to children at times during the inspection. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Baby room: 1 staff member cared for 2 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
- Toddler room: 2 to 3 staff cared for 6 children aged between 2 years of age in the morning and 2 staff cared for 5 children in the afternoon.
- Preschool room: 3 staff cared for 11 children aged between 3 and 5 years of age in the morning and 3 staff cared for 11 children aged between 3 and 5 years in the afternoon.
- Playschool room: 2 staff cared for 2 children aged 2 years and 4 children aged over 3 years in the morning with 1 staff caring for the children from 1pm.
- (8)
- The registered provider ensured that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidence in sample attendance records reviewed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
- (a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

- (1) (a)
- There were four care-rooms in the service named the Baby, Toddler, Playschool and Preschool care-rooms. Each care-room catered for a particular age range of children with the Baby and Toddler care-rooms catering for the younger children. The care-rooms had daily routines with plans for activities that the staff advised the inspectors was flexible and adjustable to suit the children's needs. The daily

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routine was displayed in photograph form in the Toddler care-room allowing children to visualise the activities.

The children ate their meals in the care-rooms sitting at tables in groups supervised by the staff. The food was provided by the service in accordance with a three-week menu that was available to the parents. On the day of the inspection the children were provided with a choice of cereals for breakfast and a wholemeal bagel with cream cheese at morning snack time. A warm meal of bacon, broccoli, mashed potatoes and gravy was eaten by the children at lunch time with an afternoon snack of scones and mixed fruit provided. Bibs were used in the younger children's care-rooms to protect their clothes when eating. Drink stations with individual containers of water were available to the children throughout the day. Drinks of milk in plastic beakers were observed to be given to the children at lunchtime in the Toddler care-room.

The staff in the Baby and Toddler care-rooms were observed to change the children's nappies on a regular basis and in response to their individual needs. The staff included the children in the process, supporting them to walk up steps to the changing unit where able. The staff were observed to speak with the children during the nappy changes letting the children know what would happen next. The staff were observed to promote children's independence as much as possible for example in the Toddler care-room encouraging children to take off and put on their own shoes and wash their hands with supervision by staff. In the older rooms, independence was promoted in toileting where children were observed to use the toilets independently whilst supervised from a distance and staff gave prompts as required.

The children had scheduled sleep times which were flexible if needed to respond to children's individual needs. Children from the Baby and Toddler care-rooms had a rest/sleep after lunch in their respective sleep rooms in cots or on stackable beds depending on their age and developmental stages. The children in the Preschool room were provided with stackable floor beds for sleep and rest. Children were observed to have sleep or rest after lunch, supervised by staff members. Older children in the Playschool room who chose not to have sleep had access to a rest area for relaxation.

The service had a system in place for allocation of time for the children to play outdoors in the enclosed outdoor area. The care-rooms were allocated time slots for outdoor play each morning and afternoon. The outdoor area was well developed with numerous opportunities for play available to the children including a mud kitchen area, large brightly painted wooden boat, ride on toy, rocker toys and chalk boards. There were sheltered areas in the outdoor space with canopies extending outwards from

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the building. A small area was sectioned off in a sheltered space with a low-level barrier, and the staff informed the inspector that this area was for use by the children from the Baby care-room. During the morning, children from the Baby and Toddler care-rooms were observed to play together with the staff in a group on rocker toys.

The staff were observed to manage the children's behaviour in positive ways for example through modelling positive behaviour and preparing children from transitions between activities. Interactions between staff and children were observed to be warm and positive with the staff showing awareness of the children's individual likes and interests. The staff used an electronic application to communicate with the parents. They provided parents with information on what the children ate and drank, how they slept, toileting and nappy changing and on activities the children had engaged in during their day in the service. The application was also used by parents to comment and interact with the staff. Copies of the weekly activity planners for the children were sent using the electronic application to the parents to keep them informed. Children's emergent interests were recorded by the staff and used when planning activities for the care-rooms.

Samples of the individual learning journals created for each child were observed in the Toddler care-room and contained photographs and observations of the children and samples of their artwork. The Baby and Toddler care-rooms had large, group learning journals that were kept on window ledges outside the care-rooms and available for parents to view.

A wide variety of age-appropriate play equipment and toys were provided in each care-room for the children. This included for example toy kitchens, transport, workbench and small-world play items. Tabletop equipment such as building blocks and jigsaws, musical instruments and equipment for messy play was provided. Each care-room had age-appropriate books for the children to look at. The play equipment was stored at levels accessible to the children allowing them choice of play activities. The Baby care-room had low level climbing/crawling equipment encouraging physical movement and play that the children were observed to enjoy playing on. A mirror with a pull-up bar to help children learn to stand and allow them to look at themselves was provided in the Baby care-room. Children in the Toddler care-room were observed to play with the toys at the home corner making 'coffee' for adults and staff read stories from books chosen by the children.

The hallways were decorated with examples of the colourful artwork the children had made with the staff in their care-rooms allowing parents to see the creations when dropping off/collecting the children in the service. A large community wall with photographs of the locality for example the school

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and local sports ground helped form links between the service and the community. Festivals were celebrated by the service for example Easter decorations were observed in the care-rooms in preparation for Easter.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The main entrance doors were secured on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service with a buzzer system in place to gain entry allowing the staff to control access to the service. The inspectors were admitted by staff following production of identification documents and requested to sign the service's visitor book. There was an electronic securing mechanism control on the internal door between the large lobby area and hallway to the preschool care-rooms. The children did not have access to the kitchen. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children preventing access to the products. The toys and play equipment were well maintained and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them during the inspection. Blind cords were observed to be secured using appropriate securing devices. The outdoor play area was enclosed and secured. Scissors were stored out of reach of children in the Toddler care-room.

Infection Control:

Children's soothers were stored in individual storage containers. The staff were observed to place emphasis on handwashing at key moments. Children were observed to be prompted to wash their hands supervised and supported by staff dependent on their developmental stages. The children's hands were washed with warm water controlled below 43°C and liquid soap and dried with paper towels before eating and following nappy changes and using the toilet and after playing outside. The staff cleaned down surfaces after use for example tables after eating. Records of cleaning processes were kept and observed to be up to date. The staff were observed to wear disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies in accordance with the nappy changing procedures displayed on the walls in the nappy changing areas. Procedures were in place for the cleaning of mouthed toys with records kept by staff.

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Administration of Medication:

None of the children were observed by the inspectors to have medication to be administered to them during the inspection. During discussion with the inspectors, the staff demonstrated awareness of the procedures and processes for administering medication to children in the service. This included the completion of medication administration record forms to be signed by the staff member who administered the medication and the staff member witnessing the administration.

Safe Sleep:

Two separate sleep rooms were provided for the younger children in the service. One sleep room was located off the Baby care-room and there was a second sleep room located off the Toddler care-room. Standard cots with waterproof mattresses were provided for the younger children to sleep/rest in, with stackable beds provided for older children depending on their age and developmental stage. The staff observed resting/sleeping children at 10-minute intervals and kept records in relation to the children's colour, position and breathing patterns. The air temperatures of the sleep rooms were recorded between 18-22°C as required as the children were aged over one year.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits and escape routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for twenty adults. However, the vetting disclosure for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. A waste bin provided in the Preschool sanitary unit was not the required foot pedal operated bin to prevent the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An application for Garda vetting was submitted however the staff member has now left the service. The service has devised a Garda vetting schedule which clearly show when employees must be re-vetted, and staff will submit applications in a timely manner.

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Infection Control:

- A foot pedal operated bin has been provided in the Preschool sanitary area. Regular checks will be conducted on the bins in each room and sanitary areas to ensure that the bin is pedal operated and functioning correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copies of documentation.

Infection Control:

Photograph of replacement bin.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service to the Inspectorate has addressed the non-compliance found under Regulation 23 on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed to be supervised mainly by sight by the staff during the inspection. At toileting, the older children were supported to use the toilet independently and staff members remained within earshot to be available for assistance as required.

At mealtimes in the playrooms, the staff were observed to sit beside the children, chatting with them while supervising them closely. When children played outside in the enclosed outdoor areas, the staff moved around allowing them to keep the children in their line of vision.

A staff member stayed in the sleep room where children on stackable beds were sleeping to supervise them.