

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO013
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Name of Service:	Ballyhaunis Community Pre-school
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Address of Service:	St. Mary's Abbey, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F35 PF60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tracey McDermott
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	11
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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
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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

Ballyhaunis Community Pre-school is a non-profit, community-based childcare service that is delivered through the Family Resource Centre services in Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo. The service provides sessional services with morning sessions provided from 09:00 hours to 12:00 hours and afternoon sessions from 12:30 hours to 15:30 hours. The service is registered to provide services for children aged from three to six years of age.

Staffing

There are eight staff who work directly with children in the service including relief staff and staff employed under community employment schemes. The registered provider was present in the service during the inspection.

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/ 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, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

Compliance Information

(2)

There were eight staff members including relief staff and staff employed under community employment schemes in the service. The following vetting documentation had been obtained for the staff:

- (a) Two written validated references from previous employers particularly their most recent employer for five staff members. One written validated reference from their past employer for two staff members.
- (b) Two written validated references from sources other than a previous employer for one staff member and one written validated reference from another source for two staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived outside of the State for longer than six months as adults.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the eight staff members who worked directly with the children.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of children and adult attendance records found that there was always an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the service.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that at least the minimum ratios of adults to children were adhered to in the service. For example, on the day of inspection, the following adult to child ratios were found to be in place:
- 3 adults cared directly for 13 children during the morning session.
 - 4 adults cared directly for 11 children during the afternoon session.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a sample of ten children's records enrolled in the service which had records in relation to the required information.

A random sample of 10 children's records from across the morning and afternoon sessions was selected for review by the inspector. The children's records were found to contain the information required under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The children's records were made readily available to the inspector by the designated person in charge when requested to.

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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records were available on file of the name, position, qualifications and experience of the staff working in the service.
- (3) The records were made available to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

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:

External doors were secured by staff allowing them to control access to the service and prevent children from leaving unnoticed. Internal doors, for example to the kitchen, were secured to prevent access by the children. The outdoor area was enclosed and the entrance gate was secured when the children were playing outdoors. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children playing with them. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen and were inaccessible to the children. Blind cords on windows had securing mechanisms in place to secure them.

Infection Control:

Staff kept records of the cleaning undertaken in accordance with the service's cleaning schedules on display in the service. The children's food provided from home was stored in the service's refrigerator. The staff prompted children to wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water at key times such as before eating and after using

the toilet and messy play with chalk. Foot pedal bins were provided to dispose of waste such as paper towels after drying hands.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication observed to be administered to children in the service during the inspection.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes and doors were observed by the inspector to be unobstructed during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- A child attending the morning session was observed to eat popcorn provided in a snack from home. Popcorn poses a risk of choking and is a potential safety risk to small children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The service's healthy eating policy has been updated to state that popcorn can no longer be part of children's snack or lunch. Each parent was given a copy of the updated healthy eating policy. All children lunches shall be checked by staff on the arrival to the service. Should there be popcorn in the lunch box it will be removed and given to the parent when they collect the child.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Copy of the service's revised healthy eating policy.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and found to have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

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) Four members of staff had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training with certificates available for inspection.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped and labelled first aid box stored out of reach of the children in the service.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

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 staff were observed to supervise the children appropriately mainly by sight during the inspection. At mealtimes, the staff sat with the children at their tables when they were eating to supervise the meals. The playroom door to the enclosed outdoor area was left open by staff to allow free movement of the children between the playroom and outdoor area. Staff positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor area near where the children played to keep the children in their view. Staff linked in with each other when children were going indoors to use the toilet and named the children who were under their care. Frequent checks of the numbers of children were undertaken by the staff. The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were out of sight of the staff when using the toilet but remained within hearing distance if help was needed to be provided by the staff. The staff handed over the children to the care of their parent/guardian one by one at collection time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a certificate of insurance on display for the maximum number of 22 children that they were registered for attending sessional services with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.