

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015MO046

Name of Service: Greater Tomorrow

Address of Service: Old Convent, Abbey Street, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo

Eircode: F35 RW60

Name of Registered Provider: Tracey McDermott

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 06/11/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	7

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

Greater Tomorrow is a community based childcare service in Ballyhaunis in Co Mayo. The service provides sessions as part of the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre services to asylum seekers. The service is registered to provide two morning sessions from 09:00-10:50 hours and 11:20-13:10 hours, four days per week (Monday to Thursday) for children aged from one to three years of age.

Staffing

There are two staff working directly with the children in the service with an additional five staff available to provide relief cover when required.

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, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 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 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 seven staff members including relief staff 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 two staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven 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 two 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 seven 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) An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. There were two staff members working directly with four children during the early session. The two staff worked with six children in the later session.

(3) The minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 2 staff working directly with between 4 and 6 children during the inspection.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of all the staff were kept on file in the service.

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

(1)(a)

The service had a settling in policy described in the parent handbook given to parents when their child started in the service. Parents were welcome to stay with their children as long as was necessary when they were settling. Parents/guardians were observed to be greeted with familiarity by staff when dropping off and collecting their children. The staff told the inspector that they used electronic applications to help aid communication with parents. There was a family wall in the playroom with pictures of children and their families. Photographs of children playing and engaging in activities were also hung on the playroom walls. The staff had made a wall display of emojis showing different feelings such as happy/ sad/ laughing/ tired and cross. The emojis were used by staff to help communicate with the children who came from many other countries with different parent languages. The staff were alert to children's various ways of communicating such as that they were hungry. For example, at one stage a child started to roll up their sleeves to show that

they wanted to wash their hands before eating. The staff helped the child wash their hands and gave them their snack. The staff kept scrap books for each child in the service. These scrap books contained items such as paintings and pictures made by the children and photographs of them playing.

The staff managed the children’s behaviour in positive ways. A simple, daily routine was in place and the staff let the children know when transition times were approaching to prepare them for the change for example before lunch time and outdoor play time. During the inspection two children had a disagreement over a toy when playing outside. The staff got down to the children’s eye levels and spoke with them about sharing and helped them resolve the disagreement in an age-appropriate way.

There was a wide, diverse range of toys for the children to play with both outdoors and indoors. In the enclosed outdoor play area, the children had access to and played with rocker toys, low level climbing systems, ride on toys and hula hoops during the sessions. Open shelf storage systems were used in the playroom to store the toys and play equipment allowing the children free access to the toys that they wanted to play with. On the inspector’s arrival to the service children were playing with small toy cars and interactive music toys. Real world toys such as play kitchen items were available in the home corner and one child played with a dustpan and brush ‘cleaning the floor’. At one stage children played in a group at a table with staff. They played with toy kitchen items and staff chatted with them asking them about the colours of toy plates. When some children wanted to colour pictures, the staff provided paper and colouring markers to them during the later session. Small children climbed and played on the low-level climbing system in the playroom. Messy play tables were available to facilitate water play in the playroom but were not used on the day.

Some children sat and rested on the soft sofa during the sessions. None of the younger children needed to sleep when in the service for the sessions and the separate sleep room containing two cots was not used.

The service provided a small fruit snack early in the session and the children’s lunches were provided by parents/ guardians. The staff sat with the children at tables when eating and chatted with them. Younger children were placed in highchairs by the staff when it was time for them to eat their meals. After lunchtime the children washed their hands and helped tidy up before going outside with the staff to play.

The children were prompted to put on their own coats if they were able to and staff helped children who needed assistance. The staff informed the inspector that children’s nappies were changed in accordance with their individual needs with nappy changing facilities provided. Records of nappy changes were kept.

The children were encouraged to help to tidy up after play and praised by the staff for their efforts. Staff members named actions for example “now we will put this on the shelf” helping the children learn new

words and progress their speech development. The service was located near a railway and when a train horn was sounded the staff stopped what they were doing and asked the children could they hear the train nearby. Songs such as “the wheels on the bus” were sang by the staff to the children who joined in the chorus singing “beep, beep, beep”.

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 door to the premises was secured on the inspector’s unannounced arrival to the service. The staff controlled the entry to and exit of people from the service. The staff admitted the inspector to the service following review of identification documents. Cleaning products were stored at heights and out of reach of children. The children did not have access to the kitchen area. The pull cord in the nappy changing unit was secured at a height out of reach of the children. The heating system boiler was fenced off from the outdoor play area and was inaccessible to children. The outdoor space was enclosed and the gates were secured to prevent children from leaving unnoticed. The blind cords in the sleep room had safety securing devices in place.

Infection Control:

The staff supervised the children when washing their hands with liquid soap and warm water and drying them with paper towels. The children’s snacks were stored in the service’s refrigerator on their arrival to the service. The toys, play areas and sanitary units were found to be clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were on display in the service and the staff kept written records of the cleaning processes carried out. Windows were open to ventilate the playroom during the sessions.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children needed medicine to be administered to them in the service. There was a record book available to record any medicines that may need to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

There was a separate sleep room with two standard cots for children to sleep in if tired. A room thermometer to record air temperature in the sleep room was provided. During the inspection the inspector recorded the air

temperature at 19.8°C. There was a record book for staff to record ten-minute observations of sleeping children to include their colour, breathing pattern and position when needed.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The impact absorbent tiles in the outdoor area had gaps between some of them and were lifting upwards in places posing trip hazards and safety risks to the children and staff members. The dark tiles were also observed to mark and leave dark stains on the children's clothing and footwear when they were playing outdoors.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Any tiles that are lifting will be taken up and rendered even with no gaps between them. The tiles will be power hosed clean and will continue to be maintained when necessary or by request. The works will be completed by the company who carry out maintenance (Bridgestock) by the 31 January 2025.
The service will monitor the tiles to ensure that they do not lift and have gaps in between. The service will make sure the company who carry out maintenance (Bridgestock) power hose the outdoor play area monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A copy of an email from the company who carry out maintenance dated the 10 December 2025.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance should be addressed when the actions submitted by the service are completed. The service is to submit evidence to the Inspectorate when the actions outlined are completed. This non-compliance remains outstanding and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A designated member of staff checked each child in and out of the service during the inspection and recorded the details on attendance sheets.

(3) (a) and (b)

There was a visitor record book in the service and contained dated records of the entry of visitors to the Service approved by the staff members.

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) There was a staff member with the relevant first aid responder (FAR) qualification employed in the service and immediately available to the children.

(2)

- (a) An adequately equipped and labelled first aid box was safely stored in an easily identifiable location the hallway.
- (b) The first aid equipment available during the inspection if a child required first aid treatment.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The staff kept written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service. The records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 5 November 2024.
- (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained in the 1 September 2024 and the smoke alarms on the 15 August 2024
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed if a fire occurred in the service were clearly displayed in the playroom beside the entrance door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance in place for a sessional service providing care for up to 11 children with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.