

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015MO083 | | |
| Name of Service: | Mulranny Community Playgroup Ltd | | |
| Address of Service: | Playgroup Building, Mulranny, Co. Mayo | | |
| Eircode: | F28 R721 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Louisa Stoney | | |
| Service type: | Part Time, Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 13/09/2023 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 20 | PM - |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Year's Inspectorate, 2 nd 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Mulranny Community Playgroup Ltd is registered to provide part-time and sessional services for children aged two to six years of age and is located in Mulranny in Co. Mayo. The service is open weekdays from 9:30 to 14:00hours for 38 weeks of the year with sessional services operating from 09:30-12:30hours. The inspection took place at the beginning of the preschool year and at the time the service had not yet recommenced parttime service provision.

Staffing

There are four staff members employed in the service including an adult employed under a community employment scheme.

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 regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23 and 28.

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

(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, and

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) There was a named designated person in charge and a named deputy in the service.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises during the inspection.

(2) (a), (b), (c), (d)

The designated person in charge informed the inspector that there were no new staff members working in the service since the most recent focused inspection of the 21 May 2021. The vetting files for the four staff members in the service had been reviewed and found to be compliant following previous inspection processes.

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) On the morning of the unannounced inspection there were 2 staff working directly with 20 children in the service. A third adult employed under a community employment scheme was also present throughout the period of inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children specified for a sessional service of one adult to each eleven children was observed to be satisfied on the day of the inspection with two adults caring directly for twenty children.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

A sample of 11 children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was readily available for inspection by the inspector on request.

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 two playrooms in the service named Playroom 1 and Playroom 2 that were connected by a hallway. A third additional small sensory playroom was not in use on the day as equipment was in the process of being installed in this room. The children moved freely between the playrooms with freedom to choose to play with the different toys and play equipment in both areas. The toys and play equipment were arranged in defined areas of interest. For example, Playroom 1 had a messy play area with an equipped sand-table and an art easel where children wearing aprons to protect their clothes were observed to paint pictures. This playroom had a rest area with a couch that the children sat on and soft cushions next to a library containing age-appropriate books. The staff advised the inspector that books were rotated regularly from the service's supply of reading material. Children when using playroom 1 were observed to play on rugs with the large selection of transport toys and construction toys creating different shapes and structures. Playroom 2 held a well-developed home and shop area including wooden and metal play utensils and food items where children played in groups. Baby dolls were brought for walks by some children in buggies in this playroom. Some children sat at tables working with puzzles and linking toys supporting the development of fine motor skills.

The weather on the day was inclement with very heavy rain and the children did not play outside though the staff advised they routinely would. The staff played music in Playroom 1 and encouraged the children to dance and take part in action songs. An enclosed outdoor area was provided to the rear of the building. The area was directly accessible from Playroom 2 and had cement ground cover with impact absorbent matting in place under low level climbing equipment. There was a small pebble area to one side of the space where plastic buckets and spades were provided for digging play. Plastic seating and a table were provided in addition to toys such as a tool bench, basketball hoop and playhouse. The staff advised the inspector that the ride on toys stored in the wooden storage shed were taken to the nearby tennis court for play. Helmets to be used by children when playing with the equipment were stored on a coat rack in the service hallway.

The community playground beside the service was also available to the children when used was treated as an outing by the staff.

At mealtime, the children sat together in groups at tables in Playroom 1 to eat their food that had been provided from home. The children had individualised table mats with their names on them. Sandwiches, wraps and fruits such as chopped grapes were eaten by the children who were supervised by staff members that chatted to them encouraging socialisation.

The children in attendance were toilet trained and supported to use the toilet when they needed to with assistance given by the staff members if needed. The staff were observed to prompt and supervise the children to wash their hands following using the toilet and after messy play activities such as painting.

The staff were positive in their approaches to and interactions with the children. The children's behaviour was managed in a positive manner by the staff with children for example encouraged to take their turn at the art easel and share with each other. Children who were settling into the service were warmly comforted by staff if upset. The staff advised that inspector that there was an open-door policy in the service, with parent's welcome to visit and that some parents stayed with children if needed to assist their transitioning into the service. The staff were observed to greet parents at collection time and pass on relevant information regarding the child's day in the service. Email and electronic messaging systems were used to communicate with parents.

A family wall with photographs of the children's families was in the process of being developed by the staff. There was a large photographic display named "Our Community" in the hallway with photographs of local amenities and people relevant to the children forming a link between the service and community for children.

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 service's entrance doors were secured to allow staff to control access to the service and prevent children from leaving unauthorised. The kitchen door was secured to prevent children from accessing the area.
- Cleaning products were stored on high shelving and in high cupboards in the sanitary area hallway and were inaccessible to the children.
- The play equipment in use on the day of inspection was observed to be in good condition and appropriate for the age range of the children using it.

Infection Control:

- The toys and equipment were clean and in good condition. Staff members cleaned down surfaces after use and records were kept of the cleaning undertaken in the service. Warm water, paper towel, liquid soap and foot-pedal operated bins were provided for handwashing and drying purposes. A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable food items such as cheese and processed meats provided from home in children's snacks.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered to a child during the inspection.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency fire exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the period of inspection.

Outing:

- The staff advised the inspector that on occasion the children in the service used the community playground located beside the premises and a nearby tennis court to play in. Risk assessments were carried out of the areas by staff and permission was sought from parents for the outings. The staff brought first aid equipment and a mobile phone should it be required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance in place valid until the 27 March 2024 for a maximum of 22 children registered in the service.