

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier	TU2015MO102
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Name of Service:	Robeen Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	Robeen, Hollymount, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F12 X761
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tomas Geraghty
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	51
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency. 2nd Floor St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo. F23HP58
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin, F Kelly
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Robeen Community Playschool is a community-based service located in a rural area in Robeen, county Mayo. The service is registered to provide full day care services to children aged between 0 and 6 years from 08:00-17:30 hours. Facilities provided for preschool children include three playrooms located on the ground floor and a playroom located on the first floor. A separate sleep room is provided for the younger children in the service on the ground floor. There are sanitary facilities provided for children and staff with outdoor play areas available to the children on the premises. The service is registered to provide school aged childcare

Staffing

There are twenty staff working in the service including childcare workers, a manager and cook. An adult student was on educational placement at the time of the inspection. The registered provider does not work 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

9 Management and Recruitment

10 Policies

11 Staffing Levels

19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child

25 First Aid

27 Supervision.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms baby room, junior preschool room and senior preschool room.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was prompted by information received by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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

(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.

(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.

providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service manager was assigned as the designated persons in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the service manager was the person in charge and was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the service manager it was confirmed that there were 21 members working in the service, which included the registered provider, manager and a kitchen staff member and a student of work placement. The student was supervised by the qualified staff. These files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

- (2)(a) Of the forty-two references required, thirty-five references were sourced from past employers and were validated.
- (b) The remaining seven required references were from sources other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 21 staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosures were available for two adults working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to a Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.
- (7) Evidence that the staff supervision policy was implemented was available for inspection on the day. Records of individual staff supports and supervision records were available in the staff files.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

A process was in place to develop and approve the service's policies and procedures. A number of policies were reviewed on the day of inspection to ensure that the policies were consistent with service practices that were observed during the duration of the inspection.

The following policies were reviewed and were found to be compliant.

- Policy on behaviour management
- Policy on accident and incident.
- Policy on recruitment.
- Policy on risk assessment.
- Policy on staff training.
- Policy on supervision of staff.
- Child safeguarding statement.

Each policy outlined the procedures to be followed in relation to the subject matter. Effective systems were in place to review policies and the duration of records to be maintained. The service had maintained records indicating that staff had read, understood and undertaken to abide by all the policies and procedures of the service.

Evidence was available to indicate that the child safeguarding statement was reviewed on 03-12-2024.

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) There were 14 adults working directly with 69 children on the inspectors' arrival at the service.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the day of the 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 playroom: In the morning four adults cared for eight children availing of full time and part-time day care services. The children were aged from 10 months to 19 months old. Three adults cared for six children in the afternoon.

Toddler playroom: Four adults cared for 21 children aged from 18 months to 2 years and 6 months of age in the morning and 4 adults cared for 17 children in the afternoon.

Junior Preschool playroom: Three adults cared for 21 children aged from 2 years to 4 years old in the morning and 3 adults cared for 14 children in the afternoon.

Senior Preschool playroom: Three adults cared for 19 children aged 3 years to 5 years in the morning and 3 adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years to 5 years in the afternoon.

Three additional staff members provided relief cover during the inspection.

(8) (a) There were at least two adults present during the unannounced inspection.

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

A sampling process was used with the baby room, junior preschool room and senior preschool room selected.

- The baby room was laid out to stimulate the interest of the younger child. Soft padded flooring allows for the young children to crawl and explore and learn to take their first steps. Climbing frames and bars allow the young children to pull themselves to a standing position and become stable on their feet developing gross motor skills. Building blocks and ball ponds allow for fine motor skill development. A rest area with library stocked with musical and age-appropriate books allow for language development as the staff members were observed singing to the children as stories were read and the young children followed the cues from the adults. Musical toys, dolls and a home corner created opportunities for imaginative play. The children were observed to move around the area freely directing their own sense of play. The staff members in the baby room were observed to be kind and warm in their interactions with the young children offering hugs and affection as required.
- The junior preschool room was decorated with the children's artwork, where evidence of their learning journey was displayed across the walls of the room, creating a colourful environment. All resources in this room were stored on low level accessible shelving where the children were free to choose what to play with. This room was equipped with home and construction corners to develop role and imaginative play. Specialist Montessori equipment was available for mathematical development and practical life skills such as opening locks, zips and buttons. An

array of tabletop activities and puzzles facilitated fine motor skill development while arts and crafts facilitated creativity. The layout of the junior preschool room allowed for the children to use their imagination in choosing and doing activities. There were areas of interest which included a dress up area, dolls, buggies and pushchairs, a construction area, a transportation area, a kitchen area, a sensory play and a farm area. The children moved freely around the room and child led play was encouraged.

- The senior preschool room was decorated with family photos and children’s artwork which showed evidence of exploring and creating by the children in the room. The children in the senior preschool room were able to seek the support of adults who were caring for them and were aware of the routines of snack and mealtimes and when getting ready for going outdoors. There were areas of interest which included dress up, construction and small world play, sensory play and arts and crafts area.
- In the care rooms the children engaged in a variety of activities that encouraged both gross motor development and fine motor skill development. Children from all playrooms were observed to spend time outdoors providing them the opportunity to run, climb, ride bikes and play imaginative games with the playhouses and tree houses.
- The service provided the main meal of the day which was sausage, mash and beans, this meal was served in the care rooms. All snacks were provided from the parents/guardians and included yoghurts, a variety of fruit, sandwiches, cheese and crackers. Perishable items were stored in the fridges provided in each care room. The service followed a three-week rolling menu.
- Independence when eating was promoted in all care rooms. Mealtimes were an opportunity for the children to self-feed and learn new skills. Staff members sat beside children supervising and supporting if required. The older children were observed to call on staff if required and appeared to value their independence.
- Nappy changing was completed in line with the service policy. Staff members took this time as an opportunity for one-to-one engagement with the children, engaging in conversation and song. Independence was promoted for the older children where those who were toilet trained completed the task independently as staff members supervised from a distance.
- All staff members observed on the day were observed to be kind and respectful in their interactions with the preschool child. Praise and encouragement were regularly given. The service took efforts to ensure that transitioning to the service went as smooth as possible. One

child who had just begun in the service was following a planned settling-in program which involved time specific durations of stay in the service to ensure this placement was appropriate and that the child settled well into the service.

- Sleep in the service was structured with scheduled sleep times; however individual needs were also met outside of these scheduled times as observed on the day. Transition to sleep was observed to be a smooth process with soft music playing and then into the cot or floor bed. Supervision during sleep was completed with staff remaining in the rooms completing ten-minute sleep checks.

(3)

- The inspectors did not observe any practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

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) On the day of inspection four staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b).

Fully stocked first aid boxes are available in each of the care rooms and are available to children at all times. Extra equipment was stored in the main office if required.

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

Children attending the service were being supervised by qualified staff members throughout the inspection. During indoor activities, supervision was primarily by sight. Staff members were observed to be seated alongside children offering support, prompting and encouraging children as they played. In the outdoors area staff members were strategic in where they positioned themselves ensuring all children could be seen as they played. Mealtimes were supervised as staff members sat alongside children, offering support, assisting with opening yoghurts, cutting or mashing food as required. Sleep time was supervised by staff members remaining in the sleep room or care room supervising sleep and completing physical ten-minute checks. Children who were able to use the toilet were supported to do so independently. Staff remained within hearing range of the children and encouraged good hand washing hygiene. Children were given the full attention of staff members during nappy changing. The equipment needed for the nappy change was within easy reach and staff remained close by supervising the child throughout.