

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO102		
Name of Service:	Robeen Community Playschool		
Address of Service:	Robeen, Hollymount, Co. Mayo		
Eircode:	F12 X761		
Name of Registered Provider:	Tomas Geraghty		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM 42
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's 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).

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 services.

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/ 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 25. 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 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.

(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

Compliance Information

(2)

During discussion with the designated person in charge and review of documentation it was confirmed that there were two staff and an adult student new to the service since the most recent focused inspection of the 13 February 2024. The vetting files for the other 19 staff in the service had been previously inspected and been found to have been compliant. The vetting files for the three new adults were reviewed and the following information was available for them:

- (a) Two written, validated references from past employers particularly their most recent employer for two adults. There was one written, validated reference from a past employer for one adult.
- (b) There was one written validated reference from a source other than a past employer for one adult.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 21 adults. However, the service did not always 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) The vetting information available showed that international police vetting was not required for the three adults new to the service since the most recent inspection.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for one adult new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the preschool children.

(7)

- (a) Group staff supervision meetings were held in the service with management at regular intervals with records available of the most recent meeting held on the 10 January 2024

Non-Compliance Information

(4)

The documentation on file for one of the adults who worked directly with children did not show that they had achieved the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent.

(7)

(a) Discussion with staff found that induction training was carried out for new staff in the service however there were no written records available regarding induction of new staff.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) It was confirmed by the service that two additional educational modules were needed to be completed by the staff member to achieve the required qualification. The staff member has been removed from the full day care service and will remain working with school aged children until they have achieved the required qualification.

(7)

(a) Staff induction will be documented for all new staff. Copies will be kept on file in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of templates and communication documents.

Summary Comment

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

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 13 adults working directly with 59 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the day 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 playroom: In the morning 3 adults cared for 7 children availing of full time and part-time day care services during the inspection including 1 child in a settling into the service process. 3 children were aged under 1 year and 4 children were aged between 1 year and 2 years. 2 adults cared for 5 children in the afternoon.
- Toddler playroom: 4 adults cared for 15 children aged from 19 months to over 2 years of age in the morning and 12 children in the afternoon.
- Junior Preschool playroom: 4 adults cared for 5 children aged from 2 years to 3 years and 12 children aged 3 years to 4 years in the morning and 3 adults cared for 5 children aged 2 years to 3 years and 9 children aged 3 years to 4 years in the afternoon.
- Senior Preschool playroom: 3 adults cared for 20 children aged 3 years to 4 years in the morning and 2 adults cared for 11 children aged 3 years to 4 years in the afternoon.
- 3 additional staff members provided relief cover during the inspection.
- (8) (a) There were at least two adults present at all times 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

Compliance Information

- (1) Activities in the service were arranged to suit children's needs depending on their age and developmental stage. Mealtimes were observed to be appropriately spaced out over the day. Snacks provided from home were observed to be eaten mid-morning by the children attending the Baby playroom including chopped fruit, yoghurt, rusks and cheese. The children sat on age-appropriate chairs in a group at a low-level table to eat their snack closely supervised by the staff. The main meal provided by the service was a warm main meal of pasta bolognaise and garlic bread served in bowls with age-appropriate cutlery provided. Additional portions were provided for some children in the Toddler playroom who wanted extra portions. The staff sat at the low-level tables with the children to supervise meals, chatting with them and encouraging conversations. Bibs were put on the younger children where appropriate to protect their clothing from spillages.
- The individual sleep needs of the children in the Baby playroom were catered for. Children were placed in standard cots in a separate sleep room to sleep by the staff when they showed signs of tiredness during the day. Individual clean linen was provided, and the sleep room lighting was dimmed to create a restful atmosphere. There were scheduled rest/sleep times for the older children in the Toddler playroom that needed sleep. The Toddler playroom had a dedicated sleep area containing standard cots. After dinner the Toddler playroom lighting was dimmed with some stackable beds also laid out in the playroom for older children to rest on accommodating their individual needs. Children who did not need or wish to rest were brought outdoors to play by staff. Soft seating was provided in all the playrooms for children to rest/relax on throughout the day if they wished to.
- Children's nappies were observed to be changed at regular intervals and when children's individual needs dictated by staff who were observed to chat and engage with the children during the nappy changes. Older children who were able to use the toilet independently were supported by the staff to do so but were within earshot of staff if they needed help. Boxes of tissues were available for children to clean their noses with as needed.

The children from all playrooms played outdoors on the day. There were two large outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises directly accessible from the Toddler and Senior Preschool playrooms. The outdoor areas had a large, varied selection of outdoor play equipment including fixed play equipment and ride on toys to support and encourage physical activity and gross motor development. There was an enclosed sheltered outdoor space with artificial grass ground cover beside the Baby playroom. The playroom doors were open on the day allowing children freedom to move around and crawl in and out of the spaces as they wished. Children moved around freely when indoors in the playrooms. Some of the infants in the Baby playroom stood in the soft seating area looking through the window into the Senior Preschool playroom watching the children playing at times.

The playrooms were laid out to allow children access ranges of toys and play materials at low levels allowing them to choose and replace toys. Equipment used on the day was appropriate for the age and developmental stages of the children using them. For example, in the Baby playroom a low-level mirror with a pull up to stand bar was provided to help support children learning to stand. Evidence of art created by the children was displayed on playroom walls such as the “our amazing work” sheep artwork in the Toddler playroom. Equipment to provide opportunities for messy play was available such as a lidded sandbox in the sheltered area used by the children from the Baby playroom. Birthday walls and photographs of the children were on display throughout the service creating a sense of belonging in the service for the children.

The staff used small written communication books to provide information to parents of younger children on their child’s day in the service including items such as food intake, sleep and nappy changes. Parents could provide comments in the book. A notice board was displayed in the lobby with information for parents. The staff were observed to be positive and warm in their interactions with the children and engaged with them through play. Children were soothed and comforted by staff if upset. The children were prepared for transitions between activities by the staff for example when dinnertime was approaching in the Toddler playroom. Written plans to provide guidance for staff on how to deal with conflict between children if it arose were on display. Staff communicated well with each other on the day linking in to arrange activities and break cover.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Plates/bowls were not provided for the infants to eat from at morning snack time in the Baby playroom. Children were observed eating food including chopped fruit and grated cheese directly off the table at snack time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) Suction bowls have been purchased for the Baby room. Children's snacks from home will be provided in bowls for mealtimes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under this regulation has been adequately addressed.

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 was secured on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service. The inspectors were admitted by the designated person in charge following production of identification documentation and requested to sign the visitor record book. Internal doors were secured where necessary such as the door to the upstairs playroom area and the kitchen area to restrict access. Keypad systems were in place on the internal entrance doors to the lobby and from the hallway at the top of the stairs to the first-floor area. The blind cord on the window of the Baby sleep room was secured with an appropriate securing device. The cleaning products were

stored out of reach of the children for example on high shelving in the Baby playroom. The toys and play equipment provided were age appropriate and suitable for the children using them.

Infection Control:

The premises was observed to be clean, and the staff kept written records of the cleaning undertaken in the service. cleaning schedules were available to provide direction on cleaning processes. The children and staff members hands were observed to be washed with warm water and liquid soap after nappy changes and dried with paper towels. The staff wore the gloves and aprons provided when changing nappies. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for disposal of waste throughout the service. The children's food provided from home for the children attending the Baby playroom was observed to be stored in a refrigerator in the playroom. Children's personal items for nappy changing were stored separately.

Administration of Medication:

The staff were aware of correct procedures in relation to the administration of medicine to children. When a child required to have medicine administered during the inspection, two staff checked the medication and recorded the administration of the medicine in writing. The child's parent was informed.

Safe Sleep:

The staff were observed to carry out checks on resting children at ten-minute intervals and record information on their colour, position and breathing patterns. The Baby sleep room air temperature was found to be 17.8°C within the required accepted range. The cots in the Baby sleep room and Toddler sleep area were standard cots.

Fire Safety:

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

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting available for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years and not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. A section of wood on a boat in the outdoor play area was damaged and splintered posing a safety risk to children.

Infection Control:

3. The children in one playroom did not wash their hands directly before eating their dinner. After dinner their faces and hands were cleaned by staff using a wipe, but their hands were not washed posing a potential infection control risk.

4. The liquid soap dispenser in the Senior preschool sanitary area was broken therefore children did not have access to soap for safe hand hygiene practices.
5. A sink used in the Senior preschool playroom did not have a working hot water tap, resulting in cold water being used to wash children's hands.

Safe Sleep:

6. Some of the cot mattresses in the Baby sleep room and Toddler sleep area did not have waterproof protective covering in place. There was insufficient evidence that a foam cot mattress in the Baby sleep room with a waterproof mattress protector cover met the required safety standards.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Following the inspection, staff were notified of their garda vetting renewal requirements and reminders are now set to alert staff regarding renewals before three years have passed.
2. The section of the boat has been sanded, power washed and re-painted.

Infection Control:

3. Staff have been notified of their duty to prevent infectious diseases and handwashing is taking place consistently throughout transitions.
4. The soap dispenser has been fixed in the sanitary unit used by children in Senior preschool room.
5. The tap in Senior preschool playroom has been fixed and now has hot water.

Safe Sleep:

6. The service has purchased new waterproof protective sheets and a new mattress for a cot in Baby sleep room.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of a renewed Garda vetting disclosure and photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Safe Sleep:

Photographs, receipts and product information.

Summary Comment

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

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) Certificates of the completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with expiry dates ranging from 22 September 2024 to 21 March 2026 were available for four staff members in the service.
- (2)
 - (a) An appropriately stocked first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on a high shelf in the Baby Playroom.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment