

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO107
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Name of Service:	Snugboro Playschool
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Address of Service:	Snugboro Community Centre, Snugboro, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F23 R268
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernie Walsh
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2 nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin
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

Snugboro Playschool is a privately owned and operated preschool located in the village of Snugboro, near Castlebar in county Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two years to six years of age and operates a morning session from 9:00 to 12:00 hours. The service is located in a premises used as a primary school in the past and has one large playroom, a kitchen, storage rooms and sanitary accommodation. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

Four adults work in the service including the registered provider and two of the adults are employed through the Access and Inclusion Model 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 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 Procedures of preschool service, 11 Staffing Levels, 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child, 23

Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, 25 First Aid and 28 Insurance. 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, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.
- (2) (b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (3) Discussion with the registered provider and review of records found that there were four adults working in the service at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documentation was available for the staff:
 - (a) There were six written validated references of the required eight references from past employers for four adults working in the service.
 - (b) Two written validated references of the required eight references from another source for one adult.

- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the four adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the four adults.
- (d) International police vetting was available for one of the adults that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent of Level 6 was available on file for the four staff who worked directly with the children.

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

The registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures are in place as per schedule 5 for the service. The policies, procedures and statements were consistent with the service practices.

- (a) Statement of purpose and function
- (b) Complaints policy
- (c) Administration of medication policy
- (d) Infection control policy
- (e) Managing behaviour policy
- (g) Fire safety policy
- (h) Inclusion policy
- (i) Outings policy
- (j) Accident and incident policy
- (s) Settling in policy
- (t) staff training policy
- (u) Supervision policy

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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

There were 17 children present on a sessional basis aged from 2 years 6 months to 4 years old with 4 staff members caring for the children.

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

Basic needs

- During the inspection the children ate a snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, ham, sandwiches and cheese provided by parents/guardians seated at low tables and chairs and supervised by the adults who gave assistance where it was needed and encouraged conversation with the children during mealtime.
- The children used the toilets available to them with assistance given to those who needed it. Hand washing was facilitated in the two basins in the sanitary accommodation. There was a supply of warm and cold water, liquid hand soap and hand towels.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the preschool room and outdoor area. They were able to explore several different interest areas while outdoors.
- In the playroom, the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size couch in a designated cosy area.

Supporting relationships around children

- The adults were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them and responded to their requests. The adults interacted in a positive way with the children by sitting at their level, maintaining good eye contact, showing empathy and a good understanding of each child. The adults were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children.
- Adults were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways- discussing, questioning, modelling and extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities.

Physical and material environment

The environment supported each child's learning, development, and wellbeing as -

- The playroom was equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. There was a variety of play equipment and materials appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.
- The playroom had various interest areas- farm, house, art, train, shop, reading, puzzles, Montessori, sensory trays, a wooden castle and dress up areas. The various interest areas supported learning across all areas of development- fine motor skills, language development, cognitive development, sensory and imaginative development.
- There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and table-top activities.
- The walls of the playroom were decorated with posters, family photos, children's artwork, learning materials in picture style and the daily routine for the children while in the service. The theme for the week was going on holidays.
- There were enclosed outdoor play areas which catered for different interests at the same time. One of the areas had all weather surface and a covered roof area to allow all weather play. Outdoor play equipment included a sit in school bus for imaginative play, climb through tunnel for gross motor skills, outdoor kitchen, tree house, and water table for sensory and imaginative play, a playhouse for imaginative play, seesaw for gross motor play, a slide for gross motor play and ride on toys for interactive and gross motor play.

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 entrance door was secured to ensure safe entry and exit of children from the building.
- The outdoor area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Documented and recorded daily records of attendance were observed to be kept for all of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of children.
- Internal blind cords were safe and secure and fitted correctly.
- Leads and cables were secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled to ensure temperatures in the playroom were maintained between 18 °C and 22 °C.

Infection Control:

- Warm water was available in all hand washing basins with temperatures ranging from 23.9°C to 35.9°C.
- Paper towel, liquid soap and lidded bins were available at the hand basins and sanitary areas in the service.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition.

Administration of Medication:

- A plan was in place in relation to emergency medication that may be required to be administered in the service including medication administration recording documentation required to be signed by two adults. Safe storage was available for medication out of reach of the children in the playroom and the adult's demonstrated awareness of the correct procedures in relation to the administration and storage of medication in conversation with the inspector.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the 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) The registered provider ensured that a person appropriately trained in first aid was available within the service. There were two staff members suitably trained in first aid responder (FAR).

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in an accessible manner on a high shelf in the premises.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

2) The first aid box did not contain the appropriate first aid supplies. A water-based burns dressing in size small and large were not present in the first aid box.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider purchased the required missing items for the first aid box. A monthly check will be completed to ensure the first aid box has the required contents.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 17/02/2025 the registered provider submitted evidence to the Inspectorate of the purchase of the required water-based burns dressings.

Summary Comment

The actions together with the evidence submitted has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and deemed to address the non-compliances identified on the day of inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date of 27th of March 2025.

The insurance for 22 pre-school children was for a sessional, included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,

insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.